

HEIR TO PACINO
Johnny Depp's new mafia movie
PAGE 37



DIAL A DAWN CHORUS
Alan Coren phones the birds
PAGE 22



WE TEST THE GUILT-FREE CHOCOLATE

PAGE 5

Britain could be ousted from 'G3'

Rivals close ranks against euro chief

BY ANDREW PIERCE, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

JOHN MAJOR and Tony Blair were united in condemnation yesterday of a European commissioner's call for Britain to be excluded from a seat at world financial summits if it did not join a single currency.

Ken Clarke also joined the criticism, so that Yves-Thibault de Silguy, the commissioner responsible for monetary union, achieved the rare feat of putting the Chancellor on the same side as his sternest Eurosceptic critics.

The Prime Minister described the commissioner's suggestion that Britain would be marginalised if it did not adopt the euro as absurd, arrogant and unacceptable.

Mr de Silguy provoked the controversy in a speech in Washington in which he conjured up an image of a "G3", comprising America, Japan and the EU, taking the place of the G7 group of the West's most prosperous nations. As the euro, the dollar and the yen would become the dominant world currencies, Europe would have to speak with one voice, he told the Institute of International Finance.

The commissioner did not name Britain, but if his plan were implemented, the Chancellor and the Governor of the Bank of England would no longer hold regular meetings with their international counterparts. The interests of the pound would also be marginalised in global talks. Mr de Silguy said economic and monetary union was "irreversible" and the future system of co-ordinating international monetary policy had to be finalised before the launch of the single currency. "What will be the framework for this co-ordination?

ELECTION 97
Mob-handed — the Mates of Blair
The real inner circle, page 9
News, analysis 9-16
Simon Jenkins 22
Letters 23

Should the G7 finance format be modified? Should a G3 be created? It will be essential for the euro area to be able to speak with one voice. This will be the case for monetary policy since it will be represented by the president of the European Central Bank.

"But the arrangements for its political representation — that is at ministerial level — have still to be defined."

Both Tory and Labour politicians pounced on the speech to claim that they would adopt the toughest negotiating stance on Europe. Mr Major told a rally in London's Docklands: "Today a European commissioner has suggested that if Britain does not join the single currency, we would be

marginalised in world discussions. This is absurd and arrogant."

"London is one of the financial centres of the world and will stay that way. The suggestion that the EU would take over all representation on economic policy for members of the single currency is just the kind of danger I have been warning about."

Mr Blair also made clear that the idea was unacceptable. "There is no question of a Labour government agreeing to the G3 rather than a G7. Under Labour, Britain will retain its seat at the top table of all international summits."

A spokesman for Mr Clarke also dismissed Mr de Silguy's vision. "The existing G7 serves Britain and Europe's interests very well," he said. "We see no need for existing formal arrangements to be altered whether or not Britain joins EMU. Mr de Silguy is obviously speculating out loud, we don't think he is formally proposing this change."

The spokesman would not comment on whether Mr de Silguy had been misguided in making his thoughts public — especially as Jacques Santer, the Commission president, was accused of meddling in the British election by attacking Eurosceptics last week.

Tory Eurosceptics were appalled. Iain Duncan-Smith said: "If anybody now still believes that the objective of people like Mr de Silguy is not the full creation of a European state, then this is the final evidence. Everything that has taken place has been part of that. Mr de Silguy is responsible for the single currency, and clearly understands that. People in Britain must wake up."



Final push in marginals

BY PHILIP WEBSTER
ARTHUR LEATHLEY
AND JAMES LANDALE

TONY BLAIR last night invoked the memory of John Smith as he launched Labour's final push for victory with his predecessor's appeal for "the chance to serve."

He recalled the words of Labour's last leader on the

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night before he died in 1994, when he had declared: "Let me tell you what we want. All we ask is the chance to serve."

Mr Blair said: "That is what we want, to ask the British people over the next few days for the chance to serve. We believe we can make this country better. We believe in the decency and essential good nature of the British people. We say to them, come out on the first of May and give us your trust and support and together we will build a better Britain."

As the parties entered their last frantic 24 hours of campaigning, John Major warned voters that they faced their "day of destiny" tomorrow.

The general election would be a "battle for Britain", he said.

Although ministers appear

privately resigned to the prospect of defeat, there was no sign that Mr Major shared their view.

And at his final campaign rally in London he raised the spectre of a high-inflation economy, a powerless nation and higher crime rates under a Labour government as he turned his fire on Mr Blair's failure to spell out detailed policy.

He told voters to think carefully about what has been achieved over the last 18 years. He said that the prosperity built up under his leadership and under Baroness Thatcher would not be sustained by a Labour Government.

Mr Blair said he was working "flat out" for every vote as he sent nearly 200 former MPs out of their own constituencies

Continued on page 2, col 1

CAPRICE BOURRET, the model, was robbed by a gang of youths in a street attack in which her boyfriend was left covered in blood after being hit with a bottle.

Three hooded teenagers threatened the 24-year-old former Wonderbra model and attacked her companion. Robert Tchenguiz, shortly after they left a friend's house in north London to return home.

Mr Tchenguiz, 35, a London property developer.

suffered serious leg injuries when the youths stole a watch, mobile phone and handbag. The attack took place in Stornoway Road, Highgate, on Sunday.

A friend described yesterday how Mr Tchenguiz arrived home with Miss Bourret and had to be helped, covered in blood, upstairs. He was barely able to walk.

"He was a mess and in a lot of pain," said the friend. Mr Tchenguiz's jogging trousers and white T-shirt were bloodstained.

Another friend of the Cali-

fornia-born model said yesterday: "They took everything she had on her, but Caprice did not resist and she was not hurt. Robert was beaten up when he tried to resist."

During a photographic shoot in Piccadilly yesterday, Miss Bourret, who earns an estimated £1 million a year, said: "I'm fine." Her empty handbag was found in Knightsbridge after the attack.

A Scotland Yard spokesman said that after the mugging, the couple were taken to the Royal Free Hospital. The man was treated and released.

that our language has become so impoverished, so sloppy and so limited — that we have arrived at such a dismal wasteland of banality, cliché and casual obscenity."

Speaking at a silver jubilee reception for the traditionalist Prayer Book Society, the Prince wondered what it was about tradition and traditional values that "at the mere mention of these words, normally intelligent people go into paroxysms of rage and indignation."

Continued on page 2, col 8

Model Caprice is mugged

BY JOANNA BALE
AND ADRIAN LEE

CAPRICE BOURRET, the model, was robbed by a gang of youths in a street attack in which her boyfriend was left covered in blood after being hit with a bottle.

Three hooded teenagers threatened the 24-year-old former Wonderbra model and attacked her companion. Robert Tchenguiz, shortly after they left a friend's house in north London to return home.

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Prince attacks 'god of new technology'

BY RUTH GLEDHILL
RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

MODERN society had made a god of new technology at the expense of traditional values and language, the Prince of Wales said last night.

In an address at St James's Palace, London, he said: "Many people look in dismay at what has been happening to our language in the very place where it evolved."

"They wonder what it is about our country and society

18

TV & RADIO 54, 55
WEATHER 28
CROSSWORDS 28, 56

LETTERS 23
OBITUARIES 25
SIMON JENKINS 22

ARTS 37-38
CHESS & BRIDGE 51
COURT & SOCIAL 24

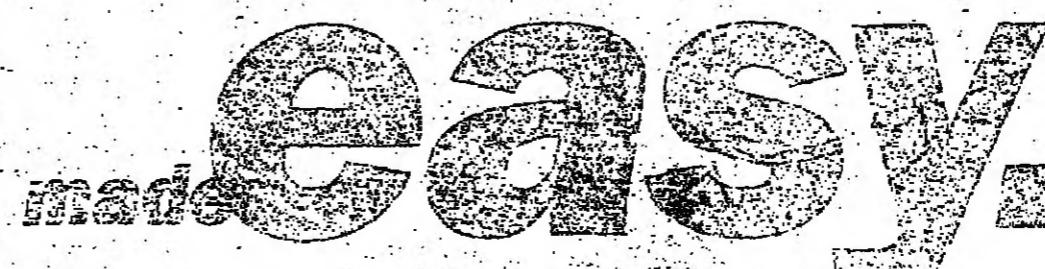
SPORT 49-54, 56
STYLE 20
LAW REPORT 44

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Marginals are focus in final days of campaign

Continued from page 1 to the marginals that will decide tomorrow's election. A large part of the £3 million given to the party during the campaign is being spent on a last-minute advertising onslaught.

Throughout the day he warned his own troops against complacency, saying in speech after speech that "it isn't over until it's over."

Mr Blair said the Tories did not deserve to be elected and New Labour certainly was new. "The Tories have changed for the worse but we have changed for the better," he said. Mr Blair, speaking to an audience of 400 party supporters in the Bristol Council offices, said there were many differences between Labour and the Tories. "Here is another one the buck will stop with me."

Mr Major ordered scores of ministers out into the marginals, as well as virtually all the official staff at Central Office. Paddy Ashdown's resources also were also being concentrated on his target seats, with the Cowley Street headquarters in London being emptied, amid claims from Liberal Democrat strategists that the party was "close to a breakthrough."

Mr Ashdown had a warning of his own about Labour: "If all that changes on Thursday is the nameplate on Number 10, it will be a disaster for this country."

Mr Major, meanwhile, delivered a stark message: "The country's future, our economy, our nation and the bright prospects for the future of Britain hang in the balance."

Mr Major concentrated heavily on the economic growth seen over the last 18 years, emphasising the curbing of inflation as the key achievement.

Earlier yesterday Michael Heseltine told voters that they were "sleepwalking into a nightmare" as he, too, stepped up the fight for the floating voter.

Mr Blair responded angrily to Mr Heseltine's claim. "How arrogant and insulting these Tories are," Mr Blair said. "The disaster is a Tory fifth term."



Prisoners display a loyalist flag on the prison roof. They are protesting about security restrictions imposed after an IRA escape attempt

Loyalists riot in Maze prison

By RICHARD FORD
HOME CORRESPONDENT

LOYALIST prisoners went on the rampage at the Maze jail yesterday in protest at security restrictions imposed after an IRA escape attempt.

houses hundreds of republican and loyalist terrorists, erupted when the loyalists were penalised for refusing to be locked into the cells for headcounts twice a day.

Managers at the jail withdrew prison officers from H-blocks 1 and 2 after the prisoners emerged onto the roof.

Last night Billy Wright, a leading loyalist terrorist who was transferred to the Maze on Friday, said he would join the protest. Wright, from Portadown, Co Armagh, is serving eight years for threatening to kill a woman.

Republican prisoners have co-operated with the tough new security measures imposed as a result of an IRA attempt to tunnel out of the Maze last month. The loyalists oppose the tougher measures, including full searches, twice-daily head counts and random cell checks and say they are being penalised because of IRA activities.

The Prison Service punished the loyalists by denying family visits and suspending all temporary releases except in extreme compassionate cir-

cumstance. Relatives of loyalist prisoners protested at the punishment outside the prison gates and relatives of republican prisoners leaving the prison were abused.

John White, spokesman for the Ulster Democratic Party, which has close links with the outlawed Ulster Defence Association, said: "The prisoners are very, very angry. They see this as a form of collective punishment."

Mr White warned the government: "It is going to get very seriously out of hand if dialogue doesn't take place. It is not only an issue involving the prisoners, it has taken on greater proportions on the outside.

"There is a great deal of anger and frustration outside too and I am fearful it may get out of control altogether."

Alan Shannon, chief executive of the Northern Ireland Prison Service, said the day's events had not taken him by surprise. "I said it would be a bit of an uphill struggle because the prisoners had been telling us they were not at all happy with what we were proposing."

Police avert chaos by ignoring bomb hoax

By STEWART TENDERL
CRIME CORRESPONDENT

SCOTLAND Yard yesterday thwarted an attempt by the IRA to bring one of the busiest sections of the M25 to a standstill by ignoring a hoax bomb threat.

Police in Kent, Surrey and Hertfordshire also received threats. They decided to close more than 40 miles of the motorway, causing lengthy traffic jams around the South Mimms service area and links to the Channel ports via the M20 and M25.

The terrorist warnings began just before 7am. One threatened the M25 between junction 14 near Heathrow

and junction 16 with the M40. The area includes the junction with the M4 where there are roadworks, which is routinely one of the most congested stretches.

Yesterday Scotland Yard decided to let traffic continue as the road was checked for bombs. A spokesman said the decision had been based on a professional assessment taking into account the nature of the threat. The Yard has built up considerable expertise in its joint Special Branch/Anti-Terrorist Branch control room to assess each warning.

However, motorists have made their own assessment of the threats, and are giving up using the motorways and junctions, the AA said yesterday. The volume of traffic on the A-road network was growing daily, and there was evidence that drivers were postponing trips in the hope they would not face jams.

The Freight Transport Association said the six days of IRA disruption during the election campaign had cost the industry at least £30 million. The cost to smaller hauliers, private and company car drivers could be at least double that.

Police say that the number of bomb-warning calls where a device is actually planted has fallen during the campaign from one in two calls to one in seven. The IRA callers appear to

have adapted to counter the Home Office's advice to companies about bomb threats, and are careful not to leave any clues by using fake accents, going from telephone kiosk to telephone kiosk, and calling nursing homes, hospitals, and on two occasions private homes.

Yesterday the M1 was closed for seven miles for over three hours: a 20-mile section of the M5 was closed for three hours: sections of the M3 and M27 in Hampshire were shut; incoming flights to Southampton airport were halted; and Terminal Two at Heathrow and Gatwick's north and south terminals were all partially evacuated.

BT trims national calls price by 10%

By ERIC REGULY

BRITISH Telecom yesterday reduced the prices of national calls by 10 per cent and eliminated the price difference between national and regional calls. The changes, which will save customers about £90 million a year, are expected to trigger price reductions among rival operators.

BT said the latest cuts raised the total customer savings to £409 million since last August. Under a price reduction formula imposed by Ofel, the telecommunications regulator, BT must increase the total savings to £417 million by the end of July. The price cutting will continue next year.

The company admitted that mounting competition was also behind the latest move. BT is losing more than 50,000 customers a month to the differential.

cable-telephone companies, whose prices are generally 10 per cent to 20 per cent lower.

From May 29, the price of a national daytime call on BT's network will fall 10 per cent to 7.9p a minute, including VAT. The price of a regional call — non-local calls under 35 miles — will decline by 3.8 per cent to the same level. Prices for evening and weekend calls are unchanged.

Since September, when BT launched a series of reductions on all types of call, the cost of a five-minute national call has come down from 49p to 40p, a saving of 18 per cent.

The cable companies said their national call prices were still cheaper than BT's. Nonetheless, they are expected to drop their prices to maintain the differential.

The authority denies negligence. The case continues.

Judge splits Sikh family

A teenage Sikh girl caught in the middle of her parents' separation was granted her wish to remain with her mother in Scotland instead of returning to a strict Punjabi way of life with her father and younger brothers in Canada. But Sudesh Singh, 35, mother of Gurwinder, 14, last night spoke of her horror that her son Jothan, 10, should be sent to Canada. "Jothan doesn't want to go. He made that quite plain."

She vowed to appeal against the decision by Lord Macfadyen at the Court of Session. Avtar Singh and his wife and three children arrived in Scotland last August for family funeral. Mr Singh then returned to Ontario with Ranjit, 3, but his wife refused to go and remained in Scotland with the other two children. He brought the custody action, citing the Hague Convention on child abduction.

Floor-birth mother sues

A baby suffered brain damage after being delivered on the floor hours after a hospital sent his mother home to her lodgings. The High Court in London was told yesterday. Francesca Brock-Hollinshead, 22, of Cranleigh, Surrey, is claiming damages from Bromley Health Authority. Her counsel told the court that staff at Farnborough Hospital in Orpington knew that the child was in breech position and that his delivery would be "high risk". But they failed to carry out a Caesarean on the day the baby was due and sent the mother home, telling her to return the next day to be induced. Ambulance staff resuscitated baby Oscar after 25 minutes, but were too late to prevent brain damage that means he will require constant care all his life.

The authority denies negligence. The case continues.

Secrets and Lies is Bafta's outstanding British film

By ALEXANDRA FREAN
MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

MIKE LEIGH's moving and poignant comedy about family life, *Secrets and Lies*, took three honours at the British Academy Awards last night.

The *English Patient*, Anthony Minghella's £20 million epic wartime love story, also took three awards — including best film and best adapted screenplay for Minghella. The French actress Juliette Binoche repeated her Oscars success by taking the best supporting actress award.

But Mike Leigh's low-budget drama, which failed to capture a prize at last month's Oscars, took the Alexander Korda Award for the year's outstanding British film.

Leigh won best original screenplay and Brenda Blethyn, best actress.

The Bafta best actor award went to Australia's Geoffrey Rush, star of the film *Shine*.

The awards at the Royal Albert Hall in London were presented by Lenny Henry and attended by Bafta's patron, the Princess Royal. The

jury honoured Britain's two most-esteemed television programmes: ITV's *Coronation Street* took the Lew Grade Award for a significant popular programme; BBC's *EastEnders* was best drama series.

The BBC2 drama *Our Friends in the North* was best drama serial, and won best actress for Gina McKee. Its writer, Peter Flannery, won the Dennis Potter award. Nigel Hawthorne was best television actor for *The Fragile Heart*. Other winners:

David Lean award for direction: Joel Coen for *Fargo*. Best supporting actor (film): Paul Scofield (*The Crucible*). Best film not in English: *Ridicule*. Best short film, *Des Marguerites dans l'Espace*. Best short animated film, *The Old Lady and The Pigeon*. Best factual series, *The House*. Best light entertainment programme, *Shooting Stars*. Best comedy, *Only Fools and Horses*. Hugh Whetton award for best arts programme, *Leaving Home*. Best children's programme, *Shakespeare Shorts: Romeo and Juliet*. Fallowey documentary award, *Fernars Last Theorem*. Best light entertainment performance, John Bird and John Fortune in *Rory Bremner, Who Else?*. Best comedy performance, David Jason. Best news coverage, BBC Newsnight's BSE coverage. Best sports coverage, BBC1's Euro 96 coverage. Best talk show, *Mrs Merton's Christmas Show*. Richard Dimbleby award for most important personal contribution (factual TV), Robert Hughes. Best foreign TV programme, *Murder One*. Fellowship: Woody Allen; Julie Christie.

Prince

Continued from page 1 to 1, even vilification. He went on to suggest that this was because opponents of tradition felt threatened.

"It is as if tradition represented the enemy of man's lofty ideals: the primitive force which acts as an unwelcome reminder ... of the ultimate folly of believing that the purpose and meaning of life ... lie in creating a material form of Utopia, a world in which technology becomes a virtual reality god, the arbiter of virtual reality ethics, and thus the eventual murderer of the soul of mankind."

Tradition, the Prince said, was not a man-made element but a "God-given awareness of the natural rhythms of life and nature".

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Leigh: film-maker wins honours in own country

14th May 1997

THE TIMES WEDNESDAY APRIL 30 1997
DPP
BY JAS ALLEGRA
MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT
ACORONES ... a man who ...
a man who ...
his home ...
treatment ...
the Director ...
Coroner ...
Brendan ...
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"grossly negligent" ...
Hospital in ...
Dr ...
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By KATHRYN KNIGHT

BOY GEORGE ...
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DPP to investigate drug clinic death of IRA bomb survivor

By IAN MURRAY
MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

A CORONER is to refer the case of a man who survived the Aldwych bus bomb but died after private treatment for heroin addiction to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Paul Knapman, the Westminster Coroner, adjourned the inquest on Brendan Woolhead after two experts said he had died as a result of "grossly negligent" and "very dangerous" treatment at the Wellbeck Hospital in Marylebone, London. Dr Knapman said the inquest

evidence had developed differently to what he had expected and it would be submitted to the DPP or Crown Prosecution Service to consider whether charges should be laid. "We are approaching the possibility of criminal matters," he said.

The inquest was told that Mr Woolhead, 34, suffered serious head and pelvis injuries when the bomb went off last February, killing the IRA terrorist who was carrying it. Mr Woolhead, a long-term drug addict, left hospital after two weeks and went to convalesce at home in Swords, Co Dublin.

The allegation of negligent treat-

Last October he went to the Wellbeck Hospital for an "ultra-rapid opiate detoxification treatment" to wean him off heroin. The addict is given a general anaesthetic over six hours so they are unconscious during the worst per-

iod of withdrawal symptoms.

Thirty hours after the detoxification began Mr Woolhead went into a convulsion and his heart stopped on October 3 last year. The detoxification treatment was developed in Vienna in 1988 and is widely used in Austria, Germany and Holland.

The allegation of negligent treat-

ment came from an expert in addiction behaviour called by Mr Woolhead's family. Griffith Edwards, of the Maudsley Hospital, London, said the Wellbeck Hospital had made "manifestly false" claims about the treatment to Mr Woolhead. Professor Edwards criticised claims that the treatment was "unique in its efficiency" and that the patient would suffer no withdrawal symptoms.

In his opinion, Mr Woolhead signed a "consent document" that did not amount to informed permission, so the treatment was an assault from a medical point of view. Claims that the treatment was "completely safe" were undoubtedly false, he said.

"My view is that this man died as a result of the grossly negligent treatment given by the Wellbeck Hospital," he said.

Robert Kerwin, another expert from the Maudsley, said he was certain Mr Woolhead died as a result of the "reckless" way the treatment had been administered.

He said the recklessness included giving Mr Woolhead 15 different drugs and using an untested thera-

py not subject to ethical restraints or safety guidelines.

In his opinion, the treatment was dangerous and unethical. "It's like driving a car over a narrow bridge at great speed, not knowing what is on the other side." The treatment involved an obvious and serious risk to the patient who should have been advised of this before it was carried out, the professor said. "In my opinion, this man certainly died as a result of the treatment he received."

Gary Gerson, consultant anaesthetist at the Wellbeck, said he had

not been told that Mr Woolhead had suffered severe head injuries recently. The inquest was told that Mr Woolhead had agreed with doctors that he could take a dose of heroin one last time before the treatment began. High levels of methadone, a heroin substitute, and morphine were found in his blood. Dr Gerson said he "didn't see it was possible" that Mr Woolhead had taken the doses inside the clinic.

Dr Knapman adjourned the case. The same jury will reconvene if there is no prosecution.

Judge says singer did have passionate and turbulent relationship with musician

Boy George wins action over homosexual affair

By KATHRYN KNIGHT



Kirk Brandon with his wife and daughter yesterday

BOY GEORGE did have a homosexual affair with the rock musician Kirk Brandon, a High Court judge ruled yesterday.

Mr Justice Douglas Brown said there was overwhelming evidence that the two men had enjoyed "a brief, passionate and turbulent physical homosexual affair" in the early 1980s. The eyes of the 35-year-old Culture Club lead singer filled with tears as the judge said he was an "impressive" witness.

Mr Brandon, 40, already bankrupt and unable to pay any part of the estimated £200,000 costs of his failed "malicious falsehood" action, remained unbowed.

He swore later to renew his claim that Boy George lied when he wrote of a "one hundred nights of love" homosexual relationship in his autobiography, *Take It Like A Man*, and expressed his feelings about the end of an affair in a song, *Unfinished Business*.

The judge told Mr Brandon that he was a decent and talented man but that he had not been truthful about his phys-

ical relationship with George (real name George O'Dowd).

Mr Brandon, who has a Danish wife, Christina, and a daughter, Sif, argued his case without lawyers. He had claimed that Boy George's tale of gay love was fabricated and born out of a thwarted obsession. The allegations, he said, had wrecked his career.

The former Culture Club front man had told the court that he had met Mr Brandon in a London pub and after a few weeks began a sexual rela-

tionship when Mr Brandon asked if he could stay over after a night out.

Mr Justice Brown said: "Mr Brandon said he knew Mr O'Dowd was a homosexual who was sexually interested in him and yet went straight into his bed without protest and without asking if there was alternative accommodation either in another bed or settee or floor."

The judge added that it was extremely difficult to believe Mr Brandon's claim that Boy George had never made a pass at him during the next few months in which they had shared a bed several times.

The judge said it was not suggested in Boy George's book that after 1981 Mr Brandon, who went on to achieve musical success with the bands Theatre of Hate and Spear of Destiny, had behaved in anything other than a heterosexual way. While Mr O'Dowd had admitted that he had told lies in the past about his heroin addiction, he was an "impressive witness" whose evidence he accepted.

"Mr O'Dowd was clearly not malicious in stating that which he knew to be true ... The allegations of malice are quite hopeless and should never have been brought."

Outside court, as he hugged his wife and daughter, Mr Brandon said: "I will fight to clear my name in whatever court or country I see fit, England or the US," he said.

Surrounded by friends and supporters, Boy George said the court case had been "ridiculous". "Yesterday I said I loved him. I don't feel anything for him today. I certainly don't hate him ... He knew he was lying, knew everything he said was untrue. He has caused himself a lot of hurt."



Boy George, an "impressive" witness, emerging victorious from the High Court

Gay man 'stabbed lover in row over chicken marinade'

By JOANNA BALE

A MAN was stabbed to death by his gay lover after criticising the amount of marinade needed for chicken as they prepared for a barbecue, the Old Bailey was told yesterday.

Steven Hawkes, who had lived with his partner Graham Hawkes for two years, stabbed him with a single blow in the chest, using a kitchen knife with an eight-inch blade, David Waters, 40, said.

They had earlier pledged their commitment to each other at the Brompton Oratory in west London. Mr Waters said: "It was not a formal ceremony, but they went there to commit themselves."

"Sometimes, ironically, people are very fond of each other and perhaps love each other, which gives rise to a single act which causes the death of the other, which gives rise to instant regret. This is one such case."

He said Steven Hawkes had "consistently maintained" the death was an accident. The two men had been rowing all day and when Graham Hawkes, 35, criticised his lover's culinary expertise it was the final straw, it was said.

Steven Hawkes, 36, who had changed his name to that of his partner after exchanging rings with him, told police: "I was preparing a chicken dish for a barbecue for the next day. Graham said that I was putting too much mari-

TV to show police tapes of abuse interviews

By JOANNA BALE

POLICE were criticised yesterday for giving a television company videotaped interviews with children in an alleged abuse case. Diverse Productions is making three documentaries for Channel 4 about child protection and problems in obtaining evidence.

The Death of Childhood is to be screened in May and June and re-examines the Cleveland child sex abuse scandal. It asks whether children are protected better ten years on.

Channel 4 said that it will not include tapes that might be used in court.

"We show a few seconds of the warm-up part of the interview, to give an idea of how a child is questioned," a spokesman said. Northumbria Police said: "We have released some film of interviews with youngsters but only after receiving the express permission of the parents or guardians in each case. None of the youngsters could possibly be identified from the material we released."

Tony Flynn, the leader of Newcastle upon Tyne City Council, expressed concern over police providing tape extracts from an investigation into alleged abuse at one of the authority's nurseries. The case against two nursery nurses collapsed in 1994 after the judge refused to allow videotaped interviews with children as evidence.

Macdonald clan chief sees red over Big Mac's lowland tartan

By A STAFF REPORTER

THE historic Macdonald tartan has been spurned by probably its most successful descendant.

The clan's bright red, green and navy tartan has been rejected in favour of the burgundy, green and navy of lowland rival the Clan Lindsay by staff at McDonald's, the burger chain. Workers at its British outlets will wear a new uniform featuring waistcoats and scarves in the Lindsay colours.

Last night High Chief Lord Godfrey Macdonald, the head of the Macdonald family, accused the burger giant of turning its back on its ances-

tor's proud history. He said the fast-food retailer had no respect for the family name it promoted around the world.

Lord Macdonald, of Sleat, Skye, said: "Whether or not McDonald's is actually run by a bona fide member of the Macdonald clan today is not important. What is important is that they are held to be one of the world's most famous promoters of the Macdonald clan through association."

"Surely if they are going to dress their staff in tartan uniforms then they should dress them in the Macdonald tartan."

However, he added: "In a

way I am quite glad they have distanced themselves from the Clan Macdonalds by not choosing our tartan. I pity the Lindsay's."

Last night a spokesman for McDonald's said the food chain regretted if it had upset any members of the Macdonald clan. He said they had been considering a uniform change for their waitressing and counter staff for some time and had recently commissioned a Scots designer to brighten up tunics. He said the Lindsay tartan had been chosen because it was a more commercially pleasing shade than the Macdonald tartan.

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Low-fat Mars Bar is light years away from chocolate

By ROBIN YOUNG

BRITISH chocolate, already criticised by the European Union as a fraud upon the public, took another step towards degradation yesterday with the launch of two new "low-fat" chocolate bars by the confectionery firm Mars UK.

The move was condemned by chocolate purists as a further corruption of a product whose chocolate content is already so low that it had been suggested that it should be renamed "vegolate", to reflect the fact that much of its fat content derives not from cocoa butter but from vegetable oil.

The advertising for the new Mars products is pitched at weight-watching women, suggesting that some long-awaited moment has finally come which will transform their lives. This was rejected by WeightWatchers and medical authorities who pointed out that the sugar content is still extremely high — though unquantified on the wrappings — and that fat, even when reduced, is still fat.

In taste tests in the offices of *The Times*, it seemed that the Mars technologists had at



Once bitten: a taster takes Flyte and finds it too sweet

least fulfilled their claim to have reduced the fat content of the Mars Bar without compromising its taste. With portions of bars sliced into similarly shaped chunks, no one could reliably distinguish the new Mars Light from the original. The total proportion of fat in a Mars Light is 13 per cent, compared to 17.5 per cent in the standard product. The new bar is also smaller (but costs the same at 27p) so its fat content is about half that in the standard. It boasts "only 150 calories a bar", though that is still about a tenth of the

daily recommended total for many people. A spokesman for WeightWatchers said: "The difference is largely cosmetic. No woman should think this is something she can eat regularly and hope to retain her figure."

The other new product, a bar called Flyte (30p for a 45g twin-pack), is described as the country's first low-fat, mainstream chocolate bar. It has a whipped centre and "only half the fat of ordinary milk chocolate". Tasters in *The Times* yesterday complained that it was mouth-

achingly sweet and had little or no taste of chocolate.

Most chocolate contains about 30 per cent fat by weight, and has a calorie count of about 500 per 100g (or 3½ oz). Chocolate with a high cocoa content is argued to be beneficial because it boosts serotonin and endorphin levels in the brain, producing a so-called "chocolate high". It also contains the stimulants theobromine and caffeine.

Mars is spending £8 million advertising Flyte nationwide and Mars Light for trials in the HTV and TSW television regions. A spokesman for the Chocolate Society, a fan club for chocolate with high cocoa content, said: "This is a sad day for Britain. These products are not healthy, they are not slimming, and they are not chocolate."

□ A flavoured milk drink with 5 per cent alcohol has been criticised by Alcohol Concern as a lure to teenagers. Moo, which comes in strawberry and banana flavours, has been launched in Oxfordshire and could soon be sold nationwide. The makers, En-Toute-Caisse of Witney, insist it is aimed at the over-18s.



Sandra Hurley yesterday. She wept during evidence

Doctor 'dismissed worry over late pregnancy as silly'

By EMMA WILKINS

A WOMAN who gave birth to a Down's syndrome baby at the age of 35 had been told that she was silly to ask for a prenatal test, the High Court in London was told yesterday.

Sandra Hurley, now 42, from Aldershot, Hampshire, said that a military doctor dismissed her worries and refused to give her an amniocentesis test at a consultation in 1990. She gave birth to Matthew, now six, who needs constant care.

Mrs Hurley, who has two other children, said that Major Lawrence Roberts of Cambridge Military Hospital, Aldershot, told her the test was expensive and carried a 1 per cent chance of miscarriage.

Mrs Hurley is suing the Ministry of Defence for medical negligence. Major Roberts said that it was hospital policy not to consider amniocentesis tests for women aged 35.

Mrs Hurley said: "I knew there was something wrong with the pregnancy — it was a woman's intuition. He was arrogant and laid back about the whole thing. It was a case of, 'You're being silly, your



Matthew, 6, requires constant attention

fears are unfounded'." Mrs Hurley, who wept as she gave evidence, said that she would have terminated the pregnancy if Down's syndrome had been detected. Major Roberts, who left the Army as a lieutenant-colonel, and is a consultant in obstetrics and gynaecology at Scunthorpe General Hospital, denied telling Mrs Hurley that she carried the same risks as a 26-year-old. He agreed that he would have advised her not to take the test. The case continues.



MEDICAL BRIEFING

Save your arteries and stick to fruit

THE metabolism of a bar of chocolate — "low fat" or not — is rather more complex, but possibly less pernicious in its long-term effects, than is usually assumed.

Christine Williams, Professor of Human Nutrition at Reading University, said yesterday: "People who are trying to cut their fat intake often fail just because of an inordinate love of chocolate, and so this new low-fat bar may be helpful. In any case, a small amount of chocolate every day is unlikely to create health problems, but chocolate bars, low fat or otherwise, shouldn't be a significant part of the diet."

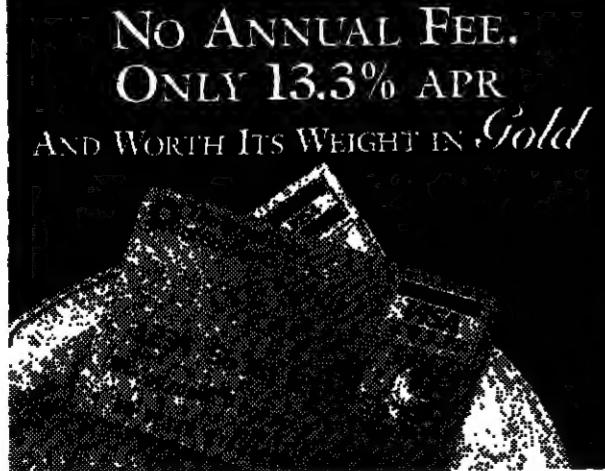
The fat content of a chocolate bar is derived from three sources, the cocoa bean, milk and cream and vegetable oil. The cocoa fat is a saturated fat, but it seems that as it is composed of the fatty stearic acid it may not raise the blood-cholesterol level. When stearic acid is acted on by an enzyme in the body, it is partly converted to oleic acid, which is a beneficial fatty acid found in olive oil.

Regrettably, most of the dairy produce fatty acids found in a bar of chocolate are

irremediably saturated. Only a small proportion are oleic acid. A bar of chocolate is also rich in sucrose, and therefore contains some fructose. Cardiologists are now regarding fructose with some suspicion as it seems that it may increase the level of triglyceride, another fat circulating in the blood, by stimulating its production in the liver. There is evidence that there is a relationship between the level of triglyceride in the blood after food, the length of time this triglyceride level is raised, and heart disease.

That link could result in the office worker who has a bar of chocolate and a glass of orange at the desk dealing a double whammy to his or her arteries. The orange juice, rich in fructose, could stimulate triglyceride production from the chocolate bar laden with saturated fats from the milk, and together raise the blood triglycerides and cholesterol to undesirable levels. It would be better to have the glass of orange by itself mid-morning.

DR THOMAS STUTTAFORD



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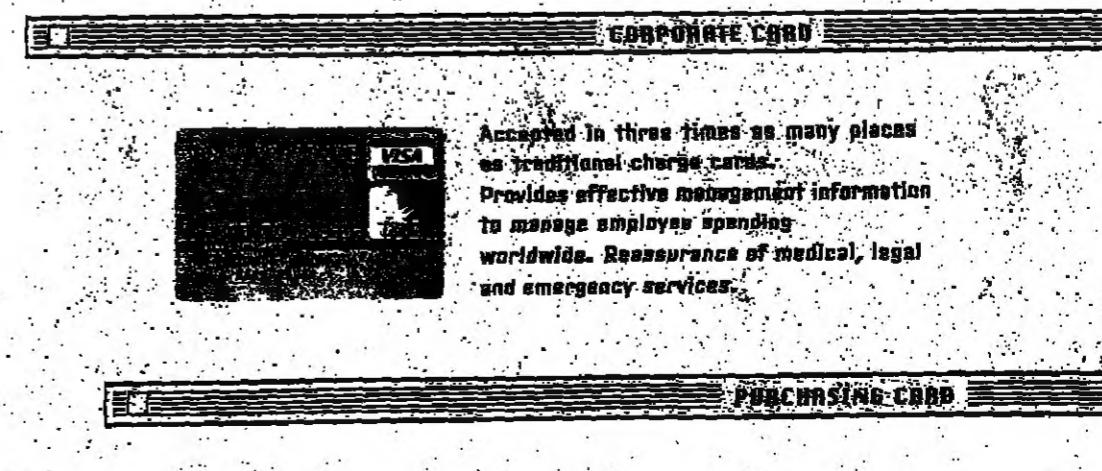
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Suddenly, you see the crimson candy coloured tail lights of a lorry.

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As you overtake, a dirty deluge of spray spits from the whirling wheels of the truck, smearing your windscreen.

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First Aid

Prepared by St. John Ambulance

ABC OF RESUSCITATION

A-OPEN THE AIRWAY

1. Remove obvious debris from the casualty's mouth.
2. Tilt the casualty's head back and lift his chin upwards.

C-CIRCULATION

Check the pulse in the casualty's neck for 5 seconds.

Not breathing, pulse present.

Start artificial ventilation

1. Pinch the casualty's nose firmly.
2. Take a deep breath and seal your lips around his nose.
3. Blow slowly into his mouth watching the sheet rise. Let his chest fall completely. Give breaths at a rate of about 10 per minute.
4. If you must leave the casualty to go and get help, give 10 breaths first, and then return quickly to check ABC of Resuscitation and continue as appropriate.
5. Check for pulse after every 10 breaths.

Not breathing, no pulse.

1. Dial 999 for medical help or send someone to do it for you.
2. Re-check ABC of Resuscitation, and if necessary, give two breaths and start compression.
3. Place heel of hand 2 fingers breadth above ribcage/sternum junction.

KEEP THIS PAGE HANDY.

THERE ARE 50,000 FEWER NURSES THAN IN 1990.

UNISON
the public service union

How can this government justify the loss of so many nurses? Are we suddenly getting less ill? Sustaining less injuries? Government underfunding has led to huge staff shortages in the NHS.

This year, only 9,000 nurses will qualify, compared to 37,000 in 1983.

Since 1990, 43,000 NHS hospital beds have been lost.

No wonder so many people are waiting over a year and a half for treatment. We can't allow this government to run our health service into the ground. If the NHS has ever come to your rescue, make sure you return the favour tomorrow.

STRAINS AND SPRAINS

Strains are caused by over stretching of muscles.

Sprains are caused when the ligaments and tissues of a joint are wrenched or torn.

1. Rest the injured limb in the most comfortable position.
2. Place a wrapped ice pack, or cold compress on to the injured part for at least 20 minutes.
3. Compress the injured part with a thick pad of cotton wool and bandage.
4. Elevate the limb.

CHOKING

1. Encourage the casualty to cough.
2. Open the mouth and remove any obvious debris.
3. Bend the casualty forward and slap firmly between the shoulder blades up to 5 times.
4. Check the mouth remove any visible obstruction. Repeat backslaps if necessary.

5. For a baby, place him along your forearm, or for a young child, place him across your knees with head lower than the stomach and carry out backslaps as described above.

If backslaps do not work, try abdominal thrusts.

1. Stand behind casualty, put arms around the waist and clasp your hands together (one palm up and one palm down).
2. Give a sharp pull diagonally upwards. Repeat up to 5 times.
3. If this does not work, do not give up, call an ambulance and the alternate backslaps with 5 abdominal thrusts.

Never give abdominal thrusts to a baby under 12 months of age.
If the casualty is unconscious, be prepared to follow the ABC of Resuscitation.

BITES AND STINGS

1. Remove the sting with a pair of tweezers then apply a cold compress.
2. Seek medical help if breathing becomes difficult or pain and swelling persists.
3. If casualty becomes unconscious, be prepared to follow the ABC of Resuscitation and call for medical help.
4. Bites that cause slight bleeding should be washed with water for 5 minutes then medical help should be sought.
5. Bites that cause severe bleeding must be treated as in section titled **Bleeding** then medical help should be sought.
6. Dog bites should be reported to the police.

Blair the
faithful

ELECTION 97



Tony's friends plan MOB rule

Labour's inner circle reflects the Clinton style, report Carol Midgley and Dominic Kennedy

WHEN Bill Clinton first ran for the White House in 1992 he gathered around him a coterie of close associates whom he had collected since childhood. This inner circle soon became known as the Friends of Bill, or FOB, a group mirrored by the MOB, or Mates of Blair.

The FOB were an eclectic group of school friends, fellow Rhodes scholars and students at Georgetown and Yale, Arkansas lawyers, policymakers and others. They became the most sought after guests at Washington parties and were in many cases appointed to some of the highest offices in the land. Others the President turned to for informal advice.

Many have disappeared during the scandal-ridden years of the Clinton presidency. Vincent Foster, the former deputy White House counsel, died in mysterious circumstances; Webster Hubbell, the former Associate Attorney General was jailed over the Whitewater land affair; Robert Reich, the former Labour Secretary, and George Stephanopoulos, once the devoted political adviser, have resigned to pursue separate careers. Only Bruce Lindsey, a White House counsel said to know every Clinton secret, remains as the closest aide to the President.

"Nobody collects friends like Bill Clinton," *The Wall Street Journal* remarked recently. "And nobody puts them to better use."

The MOB consists of Mr Blair's former college friends, flatmates, relatives and colleagues. Over the past three



Tony Blair's inner circle of friends and advisers, otherwise known as the Mates of Blair. From left: Lord Irvine, Patricia Hewitt, Tessa Jowell, Margaret Hodge, Alistair Darling, Baroness Hollis of Heigham, Jack Straw, Anji Hunter, Stephen Byers, Mo Mowlam, Alastair Campbell, Peter Mandelson

years since he became leader Mr Blair has put up a protective wall to ensure that only his closest friends and advisers have access to the inner sanctum. Aside from Cherie, his wife, the people closest to the Islington throne are:

□ Anji Hunter, 42, a personal friend of Mr Blair's for more than 25 years. They met as teenagers in Scotland, where they both went to school, through a mutual friend. Their friendship grew at Oxford where Ms Hunter attended the Oxford and County Secretarial College but there was never any romance. Officially she is the manager of Blair's private office and keeper of his diary, but has been called Blair's equivalent of Marcia Williams, Harold

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child abuse, pimping and pornography. She dismissed the reports as gutter journalism.

□ Tessa Jowell, 49, has been MP for Dulwich since 1992. Her husband David Mills, a lawyer and fellow former Camden councillor, is brother-in-law of Barbara Mills, director of public prosecutions.

□ Jack Straw, 50, MP for Blackburn, is a former president of the National Union of Students, a barrister and former Islington councillor. He was elected to the shadow cabinet in 1987 and has been shadow home secretary since 1994. He has taken the party a long way towards the authoritarian Right on law and order.

□ Alistair Darling, MP for Edinburgh Central since 1987, is Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury and a member of Labour's Economic Commission. One of the few true Blairites in the Scottish Labour Party.

□ Stephen Byers, 44, Labour MP for Wallsend since 1993, was the employment spokesman who told journalists during the last Trades Union Congress in Blackpool that the party might sever its links with the unions.

□ Baroness Hollis of Heigham, 55, Labour spokeswoman for social security. She led the successful Lords revolt to secure a share of pensions for ex-wives, a policy which the Government was forced to adopt.

□ Patricia Hewitt, 44, Neil Kinnock's press officer. She helped to run his 1992 election campaign but has survived to be chosen as candidate for Leicestershire West. Director of research with Andersen Consulting since 1994 on a salary exceeding £100,000, she has become a leading writer on gender issues.

Blair the evangelist blesses faithful come to bear witness



Matthew Parris, on tour with the Labour leader, finds that if the style of his speech has changed since the campaign started, the content has not

words together. He pauses as this floe creaks and sinks beneath him, then strikes out for another — "no return to boom and bust". Where from here? You can almost hear the mental computer whirr as a hundred approved soundbites are tested in a micro-second. "No going back to the past" — Smaller class sizes for five / six / seven-year-olds. Thus, and safely, did Mr Blair reach the other side. How will it be next Monday?

day when the new Prime Minister meets (say) the Permanent Secretary to the Treasury?

"Can I seek your view on a half-point increase in interest rates, Prime Minister?"

"Opportunity for the many and not the few!"

"I beg your pardon, Prime Minister?"

"An end to the divisive policies of the last 18 years. From twelfth to eighteenth in the world prosperity league. No going back to the past!"

Thus, and safely, did Mr Blair reach the other side. How will it be next Monday?

From Battersea, Mr Blair's helicopter proceeded at 130 knots to Gloucester. "As you will recall," said a spin doctor, microphone in hand, doubling as courier in our coach. "Tony went to Gloucester at the start of the campaign and met people who had switched from Tory to Labour. Today he'll be meeting more switchers and their families." We reached the civil service sports ground.

"There's your paddock," said a Labour minder of the Mormon tendency in charge of the press, to me. I escaped from my paddock. Mr Blair arrived. Everyone cheered. The sun came out. An excited vicar, in dog collar, stood sentry duty as flags in Labour's new episcopal purple colours were waved and a jazz band played *Ain't Misbehavin'*.

The evangelist shook hands with a ten-year-old "who joined today". She appeared quite overcome. Then, like a sinner who had repented and come to tell the Good News, the former Tory MP Alan Howarth gave witness and asked Mr Blair to meet another former Tory candidate, called Gareth, in a rainbow rosette. They shook hands and everyone cheered. Mr Blair ploughed around the crowd, shaking hands and signing broken legs. Mr Blair spoke. It was the same speech. "Our young people are the future". "Education for the many and not the few."

The leading article in *The Times* yesterday spoke of "a tower of dreams". To watch Mr Blair, and the faces of his well-wishers yesterday, was to appreciate the peripety of that phrase.

He believes in himself, almost.



Tony Blair self-confident and relaxed among friends and supporters in Bristol yesterday

Blair and Peter Mandelson, Ms Mowlam, who married City banker Jon Norton two years ago, benefit from being one of the most likeable MPs in Westminster. She is very close to Mr Blair.

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We envy the British economy, says top German industrialist

GERMANY'S top industrialist yesterday extravagantly praised Britain's economic record, held up the country as a model for Germany and sympathised with John Major's refusal to sign the Social Chapter.

Hans-Olaf Henkel, who heads the German Confederation of Industry, strayed into the British election campaign with his comments but his chief target was the German political class. Like President Roman Herzog — who made a blistering attack on the Bonn élite at the weekend — Herr Henkel believes German politicians are reforming too sluggishly and need lessons from abroad.

In an interview for *The Times*, the industrialist said that the British would be right to celebrate Margaret Thatcher as the true winner of the election since her economic views now dominated political thinking. "Both of the leading British parties are basically following an economic course which in this country is only followed, and preached by, a party

Tory reforms have won a ringing endorsement from a man who wants them at the heart of Europe. Roger Boyes reports

that commands barely 5 per cent of the voters," said Herr Henkel, referring to the Free Democrats, the very junior partner in the German Government.

The result, he says, was that Britain was booming and was "already emerging as a real model for Europe". Germans should take heed. "How is it that foreigners have invested ten times as much in Britain since 1981 as in the German market, which is double the size? How is it that in the last four years more than 600,000 new jobs were created in Britain while our unemployment rose by an even greater number?"

Other European countries were in a laggard, unable to move forward quickly. "For them the traffic lights are on amber, but for Britain the economy is coasting through on a wave of green lights — unemployment is sinking from

month to month, net income is rising, public borrowing is down." Herr Henkel, 56, a former IBM executive, said: "Either we continue on the current course at this speed, in which case we will have to take the medicine in the next two years or so; or we find the right kind of consensus and reform in time as the Swedes and the Dutch have managed to do. I work from morning to night in order to achieve the second outcome but in order to achieve it I have to point out the dangers of the first."

That meant, he said, taking Britain seriously. He had invited Tony Blair to the annual conference of his federation as a kind of teaching aid for German politicians. "I wanted the German public to see that a Labour leader can give a speech which I had heard, in terms of economic focus, from only a very few members of

our government coalition." However, he thought that Labour's emphasis on signing the Social Chapter was misplaced: "Personally I would subscribe to the opinion of Mr Major. If it is true that unemployment is the real issue in Europe, and not the working poor, then heads of government should turn to the United Kingdom and ask: what can you teach us? That is why I firmly believe the United Kingdom should be part of Europe."

Herr Henkel, most German observers seem to agree, irritates Chancellor Kohl and the government with his persistent pleading for rapid change. The Kohl team thinks it is going as fast as it can without destroying social consensus. "Last year saw more changes than in the previous ten, but it still not enough," said the industrialist. The time had come to shake up

not only the running of the economy, but also the complex electoral system, moving towards the British model of first past the post.

Some of Herr Henkel's initiatives — restricting sick pay and cutting taxes — have been taken up by the government. President Herzog's "time for a change" weekend speech owed much to Herr Henkel's personal influence.

But the British paradox — popular discontent with the Conservative Party despite a thriving economy

— was something that had to be faced by German politicians.

"Politicians have to decide: are they going to make a dent in history by celebrating record tenures in office — or by making society more competitive?" Britain, he said, could learn a few things from Germany, above all how to use work-training schemes to reduce youth unemployment. But, he concluded, "the Anglo Saxon model will certainly be the model of the next few decades ... so, lucky Great Britain."



Straying into the British election: Hans-Olaf Henkel

Goldsmith says party will fight on beyond poll



The Tories are a lost cause says Sir James Goldsmith as he prepares for the role of Labour's European watchdog, writes Ben Macintyre

turnout for the Referendum Party would "demonstrate that it is the greatest protest movement since the war".

"The only way of controlling the Blair government and ensuring that they do not give in to Brussels is to have a strong Referendum Party," he said. The millionaire, who is standing against Conservative David Mellor in Putney, flatly declined to say what level of nationwide support he would consider a success, and instead emphasised that the first part of the party's platform, bringing the debate on Europe into the open, had already been achieved.

Most opinion polls predict that the Referendum Party, fielding 547 candidates, will not win a single seat, although the party yesterday cited a Labour newsletter from Gosport showing its candidate ranked second according to a door-to-door canvass returns with a projected 23 per cent, 13 per cent behind Labour.

With or without a presence in Parliament, Sir James plainly envisages a long-term role from himself as a watchdog of the future government-backed by an organisation that will continue to lobby until a referendum on Europe is called.

"We will not, in the future, allow lies to be told. We will be a channel for mobilisation against any new betrayal," Sir James said.



Goldsmith: "I believe we need to continue"

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No. 15

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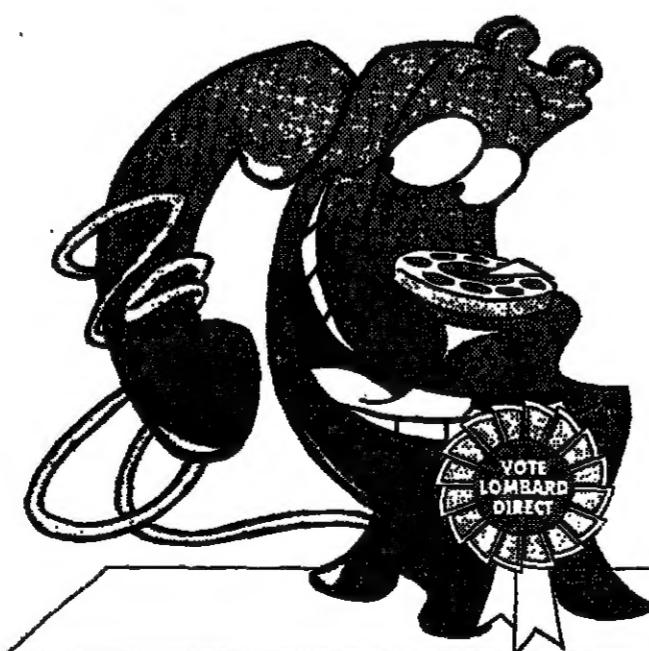
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Alan Hamilton finds that Britain's most remote electorate has little appetite for politics

Islanders are happy to keep campaign at bay

IT SEEMS like a good idea to track down the remotest voter in Britain, the one who will have to travel furthest to exercise his democratic right at a polling station.

The map and the Western Isles electoral register point to Husinish, a huddle of three crofts on the western seaboard of Harris, cowering against the onslaught of Atlantic weather.

To get there from the nearest ballot box at Tarbert is a 17-mile drive along a single-track road that twists and turns through the dun-brown barren landscape. To the left the sea shimmers in an intense clarity of northern light. Every three minutes, the weather changes from dazzling sun to leaden downpour. It would be sublime were it not for the abandoned cars, cannibalised and rusting at every bend.

The road ends by a silver beach. I walk among wild-haired sheep to the furthest house, tripping an alarm of barking collies, and knock on the door which is opened a crack by an elderly lady. She eyes me suspiciously. I state my business, beg two min-



SNP's Anne Lorne Gillies: willing to sing for votes

utes' talk, and suggest a photograph.

"Och no," says she in her soft, precise, Hebridean way. "We are far too busy today. We are expecting visitors." The door is closed. I suspect her visitors are due a fortnight on Thursday, but I have made a serious tactical error in failing to change down from city overdrive to island bottom gear. People with time

do not respond to the full-frontal approach. Lesson learnt, I have better luck next door with Donald McKinnon, who is happy to blather with a visitor from another planet. We discuss lambing, and the lateness of his daffodils, and how good the television reception is now that it is beamed from North Uist. After half an hour, we edge towards the matter in

hand. "I will certainly be voting on Thursday, but I have not bothered going to any of the candidates' public meetings in Tarbert. It's far too far to go to hear the same old guff." Only one candidate has so far made the trek to knock on Donald's door, the Tory Jamie McGregor. Donald does not disclose his voting intentions, but he does not look much like a Conservative to me.

Tracking down McGregor, an affable Old Blonian sheep farmer from the Argyllshire mainland, takes all of two days. His peeling, down-at-heel campaign headquarters on the quayside at Stornoway, the island capital, are permanently locked and unmanned. I begin to suspect him of lying low after providing this downtown, where the Sabbath is sacrosanct, with its one tiny nugget of campaign sleaze. A Scottish Sunday newspaper claimed last week that McGregor's ex-wife had once appeared in a French porn film.

McGregor dismisses the story. He is far more concerned about the difficulty and expense of campaigning in a constituency of only 22,000 voters, the smallest electorate in Britain but scattered down an archipelago 130 miles long.

I decide to take lessons in Hebridean canvassing from the master, the Labour candidate and sitting tenant Calum Macdonald. Our meeting is delayed a day because a catalogue of bad weather, cancelled flights and missed connections have stranded him on Barra and me on Lewis. He eventually arrives and we drive to a croft at Sheishader, where Calum MacLeod is feeding his sheep. The two Calums talk amiably of crofting. We are all then totally absorbed by a strange catamaran sailing down the Minch, and MacLeod fetches his binoculars. The nearest

the whole encounter ever gets to arguments is whether we can read the letters P & O on the vessel's side.

Back in his car, Macdonald explains. "A general election in the Western Isles is like a by-election anywhere else: you get a much greater focus on local issues, and on the candidates. People know the issues already — they want to size you up as a person, because if you are elected, they will expect to meet you in the street."

Macdonald, a native Lewisian whose used to teach politics in California, appreciates the crucial values of politeness, patience and the oblique approach. "The standard Labour Party formula

for telephone canvassing is no use here. To ring somebody up and ask them point-blank how they intended to vote would be regarded as extremely rude."

Civility is all. Macdonald even regards his Tory opponent — who poses no serious threat — as a perfectly decent fellow, and thinks publication of the sleaze story was unkind and irrelevant. In private, he is less kind about his only serious rival, the SNP candidate Anne Lorne Gillies.

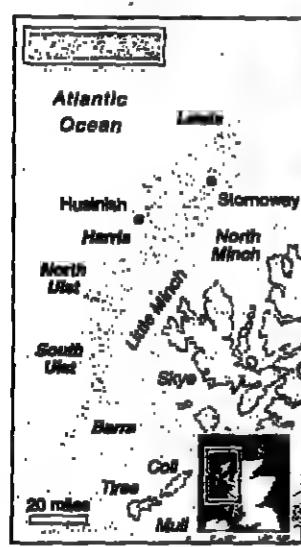
Gillies, a fiftyish and freshly remarried blonde with a successful past as a Gaelic singer, recording artist and television presenter, is from Oban, a six-hour ferry journey away, and now lives in Glasgow. She therefore might as well be from Outer Mongolia, but she compensates by campaigning largely in Gaelic.

She will have held 28 public meetings by Wednesday night. Attendances are poor. "We have to do them, even if nobody turns up. If we don't, they feel ignored. If we do, they can boast that they didn't go."

I go with her one wild night to a schoolroom in Balallan, a crofting township in the middle of Lewis. Five people turn up. At question time feet shuffle, one man asks about money to maintain roads, and another asks about the building of a new community school, until another member



Labour's Calum Macdonald: "People know the issues already — they want to size you up as a person"



Voter Donald McKinnon: will not travel 17 miles to "hear the same old guff".

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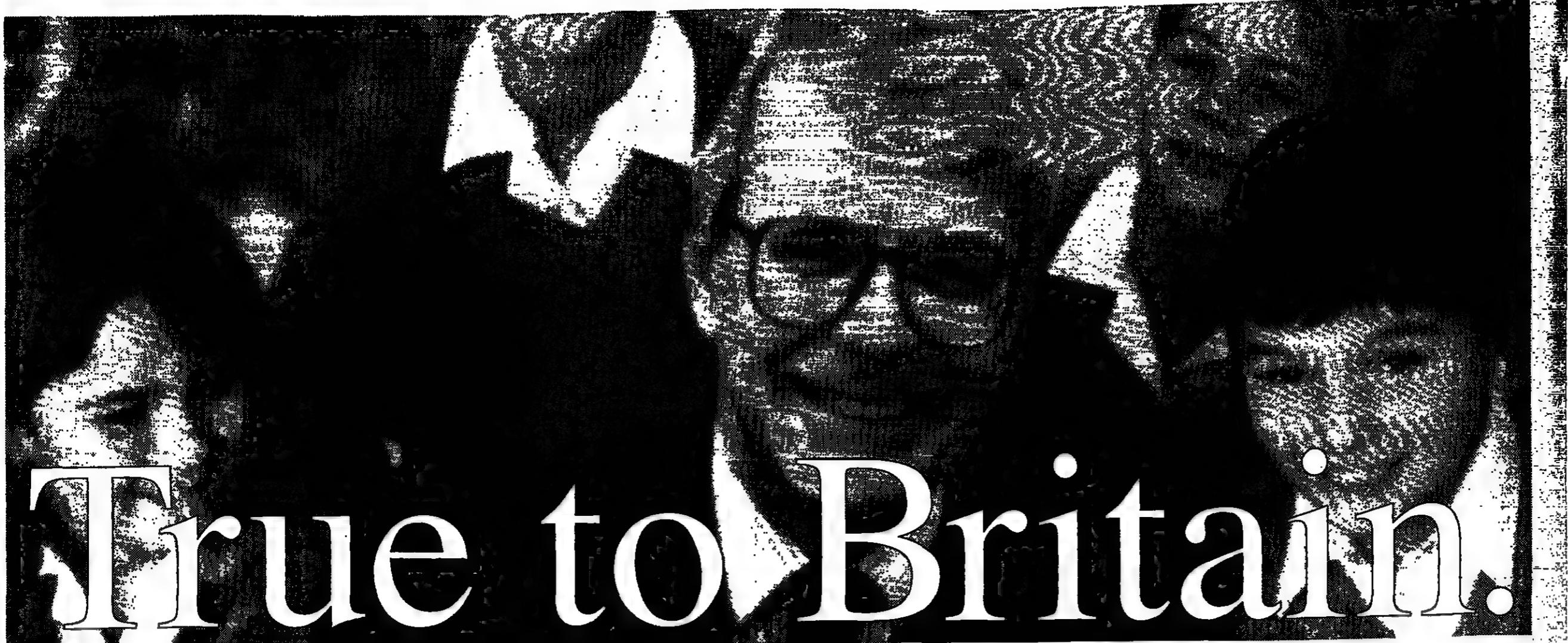
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You can be sure I would give Britain a referendum on a single currency.

You can be sure I will keep prices down and the cost of your mortgage low.

You can be sure I will cut your taxes when we safely can, so you have more money to spend as you wish.

You can be sure I will help you to own more, save more, and pass it on to your children.

You can be sure I will give every four year-old a voucher for nursery education.

You can be sure I will demand higher standards from every school and give every parent more choice.

You can be sure I will give every school-leaver the further education or training they need.

You can be sure I will think first of the victims of crime and take repeat offenders off the streets.

You can be sure I will provide the money for more police to keep us safer on the streets.

You can be sure I will improve our National Health Service, freely available to all, with more money year by year.

You can be sure I will always protect the state retirement pension and offer dignity and security to the elderly.

You can be sure I will govern for everyone.

On Thursday, be sure you mark your cross where you know you can place your trust.

You can be sure I will be true to Britain.

John Major

Helping of mixed metaphor splices up breakfast

ONE of the benefits of spending all day listening to election coverage on the radio is that it can be done in carpet slippers. But yesterday, John Major obliged me to pull on my slippers, trudge to a nearby farm and investigate the breakfast habits of pigs.

In the dreaded "ten past eight" slot on *Today*, James Naughtie had been asking Mr Major about the Tory divisions on Europe, citing contrasting statements by Kenneth Clarke and Michael Howard. Mr Major began: "You're making a complete pig's breakfast, if I may put it that way James, of two distinct issues."

A bloated electorate fed from the same old menu for six weeks is entitled to feel a frisson of excitement at the prospect of this new

RADIO WATCH

PETER BARNARD

offering, merged in the Downing Street kitchens from those better-known items, a dog's breakfast and a pig's ear.

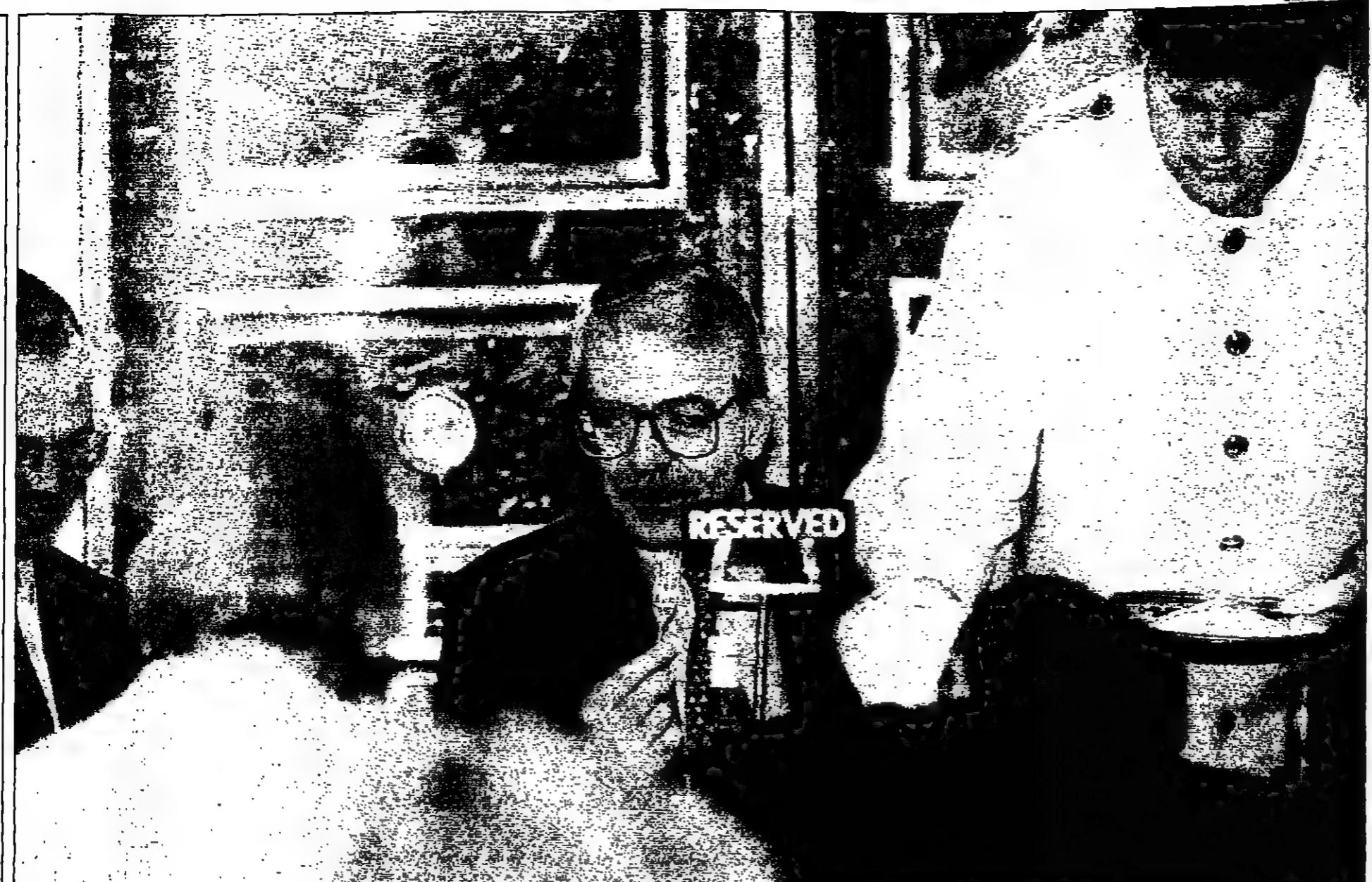
So it was off to Plough Farm, where the farmer assured me that there is indeed such a thing as a pig's breakfast and it consists of cereals (British), soya (Asian), water (privatised) and skinned milk (source unknown). Farmers mix this delicious repast using a computer (Japanese) and it emerges into troughs (British) having acquired the appearance and consistency of porridge (Scots).

I pass on this vital information to pre-empt accusations that Mr Major has lost control of his metaphors. Indeed, pig's breakfasts are already catching on: within minutes of Mr Major serving one, Naughtie announced that, on another aspect of policy, Mr Major had made "a pig's breakfast of a comparison". For *Today*, read *Farming Today*.

If the eating habits of pigs freshened up the Major interview, Tony Blair's sartorial routine was to become the focus of *Election Call* on Radio 4 and BBC1. John Malone, from Melrose in Scotland, rang to say that judging by Mr Blair's tie — shiny blue with white spots — "he's a plastic Tory. Why have a dummy when you can have the real thing?"

Mr Blair: "The choice of my tie is made pretty quickly in the morning. It's the first that comes out of the drawer. So I wouldn't read too much into it."

So the Blair household is much like any other and it is only by a miracle that he has yet to give a speech wearing, shall we say, a donkey jacket. Let us hope he does not, or I would have to pay another visit to Plough Farm.



John Major at a business breakfast at the Savoy Hotel yesterday. If defeated tomorrow, he is expected to make an announcement about his future as Tory leader on Friday

Major may hold fort until July

THE Cabinet has all but given up on the election. What now preoccupies its senior members is the recovery that must follow as soon as possible if the Conservative Party is to regain its reputation as a fighting force.

John Major is being urged to make a quick announcement, after a Conservative defeat, that although he intends to step down as party leader, he will do so until July, to enable a party leadership election to be held in orderly fashion and to allow the potential contenders to get to know their electorate, the new intake of Tory MPs.

Some ministers believe that Mr Major should not on Friday rule out resubmitting himself for the leadership in the July contest. They believe that he should say that he will decide on his own future after due consideration and that he

intends to go on as Leader of the Opposition at least until then.

The supporters of this course believe that if the defeated Tories were immediately to mount a credible challenge to Tony Blair they could not afford to have a lame-duck leader for three months — which Mr Major would undoubtedly be, had he stated that he was staying on merely to oversee the election of his successor. The chances of Mr Major remaining leader beyond July are slim to negligible, but those ministers believe that he and his party will have more authority in those vital months if he has not announced that he is going for good.

If the Tories lose tomorrow one of the principal reasons will have been that the Labour Party hardly let them off the hook for five years. Labour's

recovery from the shock of the 1992 election defeat was swift: from the election of John Smith as party leader in July of that year, Labour has maintained almost unrelenting pressure on Mr Major's government.

Senior ministers believe that if the Conservatives are to win the general election after this one, the fightback must begin immediately. They want to give Mr Blair and his team a taste of their own medicine. How to do that when the

Tories are pondering how to prevent a bloody battle for the succession thwarting effective opposition to a Labour government, writes Philip Webster

Scottish devolution, about which few English Labour MPs are enthusiastic, are two obvious sources of internal conflict. In addition to the tough economic decisions which may lie just over the horizon for Gordon Brown.

"We have got to hit them straightaway. Our route back to power in five years' time will be to put them on the defensive as soon as we can. Tony Blair will find that it is very different at ten points behind in the polls rather than in front," a Cabinet source said.

They believe that, after the initial honeymoon period, following Labour's long years in opposition, the harsh realities of office might abruptly dawn on Mr Blair. The European Union summit in Amsterdam, which seems certain to throw up previously hidden party divisions, and the Bill providing for a referendum on

them time to make their pitch.

Others such as Michael Heseltine, Michael Portillo and John Redwood, whose form is in the book for all to read, might believe that they would profit from an earlier battle. If Mr Major decides to go quickly, or is forced to do so by the clamour of backbench opinion, there could well be a period of lengthy turmoil that would allow Mr Blair a clear run for his first 100 days at

least.

All eyes will be on Mr Major in the early hours of Friday if the result is only one-third as bad as the opinion polls suggest. He has taken a lot over the last few years, and could be forgiven for wanting to leave the scene as soon as is decently possible. But if the threatened bloodbath is to be avoided he may have to go on for a little longer yet.

Labour landslide, has made no decision on whether to take up media invitations.

Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, will stay in his Nottinghamshire constituency all weekend. But friends say that does not preclude his speaking on the telephone to radio, television and newspaper reporters.

Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, will also be maintaining a discreet silence in his Folkestone constituency where he spends most weekends.

Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, will be at his home in his Edinburgh Pentland constituency at the weekend. Mr Rifkind, whose 4,148 majority is vulnerable to a

Redwood would be first off the starting blocks

If the Tories lose, challenges will begin swiftly, writes Andrew Pierce

JOHN REDWOOD will be one of the first heavyweight leadership contenders to deliver a public verdict on John Major's future if the Tories go down to heavy defeat.

On Friday, only hours after Mr Major — or, as seems unlikely, Mr Blair — has conceded defeat, Mr Redwood will appear on Radio 4's *World at One* programme.

He is also on Radio 4's *Any Questions* that night.

Mr Major is expected to announce that he will stand down if the Tories lose, but to stay on for several months to try to ensure an orderly transition. That would also have the effect of impeding Mr Redwood. The temptation for Mr

Hague, the bookmakers' favourite to succeed Mr Major, will be interviewed live on BBC Radio 5 Live and on ITN after the declaration. He will spend the rest of the weekend in his constituency. "He will be waiting by the telephone for the Prime Minister to ring in the hope that he will be invited to join Mr Major's Cabinet," said one of Mr Hague's aides.

"And my tongue is not in my cheek."

All eyes will be on Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, who has emerged as a strong favourite to succeed Mr Major, possibly with the

Prime Minister's backing. Mr Heseltine's aides declined to give details of his plans but he is expected to sound out colleagues by telephone from his Oxfordshire estate. No decision has been taken on whether to grant interviews.

Michael Portillo, a favourite of the Tory Right, has decided to maintain a low profile in his Enfield Southgate constituency and at his London home. So far he has not accepted any interview requests and is thought to be unlikely to speak out so soon after a defeat.

Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, has received numer

ous requests for interviews at his count in his Charnwood constituency. No decision has been taken on whether to take up the offers.

The timing would be crucial. His result is not anticipated until about 6am on Friday, by which time Mr Major and Mr Blair will know whether either can form a government. Mr Dorrell will spend the weekend at his London home.

Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, will be at his home in his Edinburgh Pentland constituency at the weekend. Mr Rifkind, whose 4,148 majority is vulnerable to a

NEWS IN BRIEF

Tory's dog to be kept on leash

The chairman of the Conservative Association in the Henley constituency of Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, was yesterday ordered by magistrates to keep Nettie, her Jack Russell terrier, under control. Elizabeth Tress Youle pleaded guilty to owning a dangerous dog. The court was told that Nettie sank its teeth into the hand of a woman cashier in a department store last Christmas Eve.

Campaign heat

Polling day could be the warmest so far this year with the temperature rising to 22.7C (73F) across much of Britain. Voters will not need umbrellas except perhaps in northern Scotland.

Forecast, page 23

Candidate bailed

Chris Thomas, 49, Lib Dem candidate for Waveney, Suffolk, was released on police bail after questioning about an alleged assault on a 10-year-old girl. A report will go to the Crown Prosecution Service.

D:Ream on TV

The Labour campaign anthem *Things Can Only Get Better* by D:Ream will be on BBC TV's *Top of the Pops* on Friday. Tories had asked for a radio ban on the rerelease, which is 19 in the charts.

ELECTION TRAIL

Conservatives: Michael Heseltine, Michael Portillo in the West; Virginia Bottomley in the North West; Stephen Dorrell in London; William Hague in Wales; Peter Lilley, Alan Widdecombe in the North; Nicholas Lyell in the Midlands.

Labour: John Prescott in the North and Yorkshire; Chris Smith in Norwich and Waveney; Michael Meacher in the South; Clare Short in Wales; Donald Dewar in Birmingham; Mo Mowlam in the North West; George Robertson in Dumfries.

Liberal Democrats: Paddy Ashdown, Shirley Williams, Emma Nicholson, Peter Thurnham in the South West.

On Screen: *Election Call* (BBC1 and Radio 4, 9.05am) with John Major.

CORRECTIONS

The Referendum Party candidate for Blaby, R. Harrison, has not withdrawn (report, yesterday) and is still standing. The Referendum Party candidate in Burnley, R. Oakley, is also still standing. P. Ballard does not represent the Referendum Party in Shrewsbury; he is the British National Party candidate. The Referendum Party candidate for Bristol West is Lady Beauchamp, not B. Slater, who is standing in Bury South.

Yesterday's article "An end to this literal democracy" discussed bogus election candidates, and was accompanied by a photograph of Lisa Lovebucket, the Rainbow Party candidate in Hackney North and Stoke Newington. We are happy to point out that she is not a bogus candidate who has set out to confuse voters and has never misrepresented the party she stands for.

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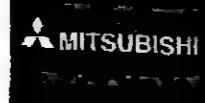
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MOTOR IN

THE TIMES WEDNESDAY APRIL 30 1997

How power changes hands in Whitehall behind closed doors

THERE is no ceremony to hand over the keys for 10 Downing Street. The British constitution works on the principle that Her Majesty's Government always goes on.

The main visible symbol of the passing of power is the transfer of the official car. If John Major leads the Conservatives to defeat, the most immediate change will be from the prime ministerial Daimler to back-up Jaguar.

Otherwise Sir Robin Butler, the Cabinet Secretary, and senior mandarins ensure that any changeover is seamless. It is also usually swift and smooth.

Timing largely depends on the outgoing Prime Minister, whether to concede during the night, or cling on hoping for some salvage from the wreckage. This is the element which Sir Robin has to leave largely unrehearsed, but even then various scripts are set in place.

A Conservative victory would signal little change. Mr Major is not obliged to do so, but would probably ask for an audience with the Queen. He would also reshuffle his Cabinet and junior Ministers.

In the event of a hung Parliament, decisions are left to politicians, and they must be given reasonable time to reach pacts and coalitions. The golden triangle of senior officials — Sir Robin, Sir Robert Fellowes, private secretary to the Queen, and Alex Allan, the Prime Minister's principal private secretary — may advise and run messages. But politicians must talk to each other and discuss terms.

The onus is to sort it out in such a way that a second general election is not inflicted on the British public.

But Whitehall is not anticipating such manoeuvring this week. With a sustained Labour lead in the polls, senior mandarins believe a Labour victory appears inevitable.

In defeat, or even facing defeat, Mr Major and Norma are expected to return to Downing Street in the early hours of Friday. They

would thank staff and bid them farewell. But there is not much dignity — Mrs Major has already alluded to the brutal nature of the exit from office. Officials will have started packing the photographs, hi-fi, and other personal possessions from the private flat, to be stored in adjacent offices until the removal men are called. Just like holiday lets, cleaners would also start work to leave the rooms pristine for the Blairs.

Mr Major would ask for an



The mandarins are on hand to ensure that the post-election tidying up goes smoothly, writes Valerie Elliott, Whitehall Editor.

Preparations mean that any change of guard at Downing Street would be complete by lunchtime on Friday, with senior Cabinet appointments to be announced that evening

audience with the Queen to deliver his resignation. This would be expected about 11am or 11.30am. Meanwhile, he would approve the handing over of certain policy papers for Mr Blair. His papers on Northern Ireland, particularly discussions with other political parties and any pledges made, are likely to be included in this batch, as are briefings on the Inter-Governmental Conference and the single currency.

Otherwise his papers would be collected and held in the Cabinet Office until it was time for their release to the Public Record Office. The Majors would leave Downing Street for Buckingham Palace. Mr Major would have a private audience to offer his formal resignation. The Queen would speak briefly to them both before they departed.

By tradition, the new Prime Minister sends a letter to the outgoing one, allowing him the use of Chequers for the night or weekend, but it is understood that the Majors have already said that in defeat they would return home to Stukeley, Huntingdon. Mr Major of course would meet Mr Blair at the State Opening of Parliament, and within a month they would have a formal meeting to discuss a resignation honour list. Sir Robert Fellowes will have already invited Mr Blair to come to the Palace. At 11.30 or noon, perhaps a little later, Tony Blair and his wife Cherie would arrive in the official car of the Leader of the Opposition. Mr Blair would meet Mr Allan, and then have a private audience with the Queen, where she

formally asks him to form a Government. Mrs Blair would then be invited to join her husband to meet the Queen, before they leave in the official Daimler for a triumphant return to Downing Street.

By lunchtime, the new Prime Minister would address the nation and the media from the threshold of Downing Street before being cheered by Number 10 staff in the hall and being formally introduced as the new PM by Mr Allan.

He would then be led along the ground-floor corridor to the Cabinet room for a formal meeting with Sir Robin Butler.

One of the first tasks would be to show the Blairs the private flat. Mrs Blair is then expected to work out their domestic arrangements while Mr Blair gets down to the business of the job. He would be presented with a three-inch file of briefing papers on the job of PM, from the secret plan to press the nuclear button in the event of a nuclear war, to his expenses in office.

The pressing consideration would be key staff he wishes to bring into Number 10. Jonathan Powell, his present chief of staff, and Alastair Campbell, his press secretary, are expected to be the first appoin-

tees. Usual vetting procedures would be arranged later. Then the main task would be to appoint a Cabinet and Ministerial team.

Mr Blair is determined to

show a smattering of firm leadership from day one. It is expected that by Friday evening the senior posts in Government will be announced. Contingency plans are already in place at the Department of Education and Employment for a team of readers to help David Blunkett as the first blind Cabinet Minister.

Interviews with new Ministers take time, and some restructuring in Whitehall and new titles for Ministers are also expected to prolong final appointments. The deadline however is 5pm on Saturday.

Plans for the early Budget

will also take precedence, as well as arrangements for the constitutional reforms. Mr Blair would also have to decide whether to send a Minister to a pre-IGC meeting in Brussels next Monday to symbolise a change of Government, or to let Sir Stephen Wall, the British permanent representative to the EU, attend as usual.

Junior Ministers and party whips are expected to be named on Sunday and Monday. Officials are on standby in every department to be called in to greet new Ministers, arrange briefings and photocalls.

The priority for Mr Blair

would be to plan a legislative programme to be set out in the Queen's Speech on May 14. Officials would also begin work at the weekend on papers to be circulated to Ministers in advance of the first Cabinet next Thursday.

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Kevin Eason on the prospect of first-time voters turning out tomorrow

Apathy prevails as young fail to see the point

JAMES BERRY is one of the Thatcher generation raised during the 18 years of Conservative government.

He was born on May 1, 1979, just days after the Tories came to power and will vote in the general election next week for the first time — for Labour. He is one of about five million first-timers, young people aged between 18 and 21 who get the chance to vote on May 1, all members of a generation who have no memory of a Labour Party in power.

The winter of discontent, the class war between Tory and socialist and the shake-out of British industry mean nothing to these children of Conservatism, brought up knowing only Margaret Thatcher or John Major in Downing Street.

Yet apathy and alienation could keep the class of 1979 out of the polling booths. Even Mr Berry, a committed Labour supporter, believes that young people are yet to be convinced that voting in a general election matters. "There are people who can't see the point," he says. "I just think Labour is the party for the people and for change, which is what we need now."

A recent MORI poll indicated that 56 per cent of

"Thatcher's children" intended to vote for Tony Blair and new Labour. The young voters, according to the poll, felt that the most important issue was education, followed by jobs and healthcare, and believe that Labour has the best policies on those issues.

The poll indicated that 23 per cent of first-time voters will vote for the Conservatives, 11 per cent for the Liberal Democrats and 4 per cent each for the Greens, the Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru. Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party attracted support from 2 per cent. Asked who would make a better Prime Minister, Mr Major scored 22 per cent, with Paddy Ashdown on 3 per cent. Another 12 per cent did not like any of the main leaders and 15 per cent did not know.

An earlier MORI poll found that only 3 per cent of first-time voters believe trade unions were a top issue and in an age when youngsters travel more and are more likely to speak a foreign language, they also seem to be less worried about Europe than their elders: only one in five believed it was the most important issue of the election.

The problem lies in getting the first-time voters to the ballot box, for MORI also found that only 36 per cent of 18 to 24-year-olds are certain to vote in this election. Those who do vote have opinions often influenced by their parents; their voting intentions are almost tribal and traditional, according to a series of interviews carried out by *The Times*.

Mr Berry underlined the point, less concerned about Europe than the domestic issues which he believes will decide his local constituency, Nottingham South, where Alan Simpson, a Eurosceptic, looks safe for Labour.

Mr Berry is preparing for his A levels at a sixth-form college in Nottingham and is hoping to go to university to study sports science. His parents work in the National Health Service: his mother is a health visitor, his father a community psychiatric nurse.

He admits that his parents' experience of the health service influenced his decision to vote Labour on his birthday. "Clearly, I was not getting glowing reports of what was happening in the NHS from them," he said.

"Having lived all this time under a Conservative Government, it is time for change."



James Berry, above, has made up his mind for Labour, as has Nicola Hodgetts, below left, but Michael Edwards, is undecided between Tories and Lib Dems



'The Tories seem to be the only ones with any sense'

David Chater talks politics to five young people who have plenty of ideas

TIM OFFORD, an A-level student at Hills Road Sixth Form College, Cambridge, is determined to make use of his vote on his eighteenth birthday in the new Cambridge South constituency, where the notional Conservative majority is nearly 19,000.

"I will vote because then you feel you have done something, and it will be Tory. They seem to be the only ones with any sense. I was born at the time when a Tory Government won the election and as far as I am concerned, they are not doing particularly bad for us."

"I have got a bad feeling about Tony Blair: he goes on about all these idealisms

which seem a bit too much. I think the country is going pretty well at the moment. I am having a great time, so it can stay the same for me."

Dalia Greenwood, an A-level student at The Henrietta Barnett School in Bayswater, north London, will be voting on her eighteenth birthday like the other young people in this survey. She will vote in the new Finchley and Golders Green constituency, formerly Hendon South, held by the Conservatives with a large majority in 1992.

"My parents, who are both lawyers, are also both Labour. I have been quite influenced by them because we often have discussions. I am not completely sure how I will vote, although I am probably going to vote Labour because I think they are planning to help state schools. I am also considering the Liberal Democrats because they are very pro Europe which I am as well. I think there is a lot of stability in unity between countries."

Michael Edwards, from Canterbury, Kent, won in 1992 by Julian Brazier, Conservative, with a majority of 9,997.

"I don't like Tony Blair very much. I don't think of him as genuine, I think he is slightly fake."

Nicola Hodgetts, from Rhyl is studying for three A levels at Simon Langton Grammar School for Boys. He is undecided whether to vote Tory or Liberal Democrat.

"I have mainly looked at issues which affect me personally. I am more interested in environmental issues and like the policies of the Liberal Democrats, especially promoting public transport and reducing the use of cars."

"I don't like Tony Blair very much. I don't think of him as genuine, I think he is slightly fake."

Nicola Hodgetts, from Rhyl

is in north Wales, a student at the nearby Emrys ap Iwan grant-maintained school, is likely to vote Labour in the new Clwyd West constituency. The old Clwyd North West was won by the Conservative Rod Richards in 1992.

"I will probably vote for Labour because I like the proposals from our local candidate, Chris Ruane. When he says he wants to cut down on crime, he seems to know what the local people want. A lot of people I know have been victims of crime."

Education is also an important issue and Labour wants to cut class sizes, which I think is very important. What I don't like about the Conservatives is that the rich get richer and the poor poorer."

David Best is planning to vote Labour in the Oldham West and Royton constituency held by Labour's Michael Meacher. He is studying for an NVQ in carpentry and joinery at Oldham College on release from his job with Oldham Council. "I think it is about time they [Labour] had a chance," he said. "I work for the building service at Oldham Council and if the Tories stay in, our jobs at the council are pretty well on the line."

THOUSANDS of first-time voters could hold the balance of power in Loughborough, a key marginal at the heart of Labour's election strategy.

Loughborough is number 45 on Labour's hit-list of marginal seats, but whether it achieves the necessary 4 per cent swing to win may be in the hands of nearly 4,000 students who live in the town in term-time and have registered to vote, among a total of 18,000 students in the constituency.

In 1992 students were on their Easter break when Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, held Loughborough with a majority of nearly 11,000. Boundary changes have reduced that to a notional Conservative majority of 3,500, which is vulnerable to the large student vote. Mr Dorrell has since jumped into the neighbouring, and safer, seat of Charnwood.

In a cluster of young people hanging around the town centre Colin 19, was in the uniform of the young unemployed: baggy black jeans, shirt-tails hanging out, hair cropped Canton bald. Clutching his burger and Coke, he said that he had worked for only a year since he left school at 16. "I dropped out too early and now nobody wants me," he said. "I have been on training schemes but they teach me carpentry and bricklaying and every firm round here wants scientists. Not much hope for me and voting won't change it."

"Even if I get a job, the pay is lousy — a couple of quid an hour for stacking shelves or selling burgers. It's not worth it."

That is the sort of despair Ms Myers, a politics student, is fighting. She said: "The range of opportunities for work for everybody has to be there. Whatever is said by politicians, young people feel insecure about their future."

"Student unemployment is not just the big issue, but changes in the workplace mean that young people are worried about low wages, injuries in the workplace, starting working life in debt."

"Young people will make up an eighth of the electorate this time. They should turn out and make sure that politicians are listening to what we want. It is our future."

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Gambia 86p	£1.31	New Zealand 30p	49p	Uganda 90p	£1.31
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Students have power to swing key marginal

About 4,000 new voters in the university town of Loughborough threaten the Tories' 3,500 majority, says Kevin Eason

prospects of finding work in those new industries are tough for young people who drop out of the education system early.

Astra Charnwood, one of the new employers, boasts that 60 per cent of recruits are graduates, while Brush Transformers, the trainee maker which for decades was the traditional employer for semi-skilled workers, has made about 4,000 workers redundant in recent years.

In a cluster of young people hanging around the town centre Colin 19, was in the uniform of the young unemployed: baggy black jeans, shirt-tails hanging out, hair cropped Canton bald. Clutching his burger and Coke, he said that he had worked for only a year since he left school at 16.

"I dropped out too early and now nobody wants me," he said. "I have been on training schemes but they teach me carpentry and bricklaying and every firm round here wants scientists. Not much hope for me and voting won't change it."

"Even if I get a job, the pay is lousy — a couple of quid an hour for stacking shelves or selling burgers. It's not worth it."

That is the sort of despair Ms Myers, a politics student, is fighting. She said: "The range of opportunities for work for everybody has to be there. Whatever is said by politicians, young people feel insecure about their future."

"Student unemployment is not just the big issue, but changes in the workplace mean that young people are worried about low wages, injuries in the workplace, starting working life in debt."

"Young people will make up an eighth of the electorate this time. They should turn out and make sure that politicians are listening to what we want. It is our future."

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01

'Idiot with fax' defies besiegers in Texas

FROM GILES WHITTELL
IN LOS ANGELES

THE siege of separatists in Texas entered its third day yesterday with no end in sight, as the man whom police recently called "an idiot with a fax machine" refused to surrender.

Arrest warrants for kidnapping and organised crime failed to intimidate Richard McLaren and his Republic of Texas followers, who are holed up in the rugged Davis Mountains and apparently spoiling for a fight with the authorities. Mike Cox, a police spokesman, admitted that his top priority was to avoid a repeat of the 1993 Waco disaster in which 80 people died.

"We think we can do it right," Mr Cox said, but rapid developments yesterday belied such confidence. As dozens of local residents were evacuated to motels and a SWAT team joined police sur-



Texas police officers man a roadblock on Highway 166 in Fort Davis where Richard McLaren and his Republic of Texas are holed up

rounding the compound, Mr McLaren announced that his only interest was in "getting the foreign agents off Texas soil". An unknown number of paramilitary extremists are guarding Mr McLaren's five-acre "embassy" with sniper

rifles and petrol-bomb booby-traps. Three group members kidnapped and released an elderly couple living nearby at the weekend, triggering the siege and bringing mounting pressure for swift police action to end it. "You're dealing

with a crazy person," Sue Clark, a frightened Fort Davis homeowner, said yesterday. "I really think [Mr McLaren] could do a suicide thing." Dishevelled, intense and fond of making headlines, Mr McLaren claims his

group is the legitimate government of a Texas illegally annexed by the United States in 1845. He has waged what the Texas Attorney-General called a campaign of "paper terrorism", seeking to clog courts with bogus claims on

state and private properties. "He's loving every minute of this," said Joe Roe, whose door was shot down and shoulder injured in shrapnel in Sunday's kidnapping. "He's bouncing off walls at the moment with all this

media interest, but I believe he'll come out for a coffin fitting." Academics have dismissed Mr McLaren's interpretation of history as "goofy". Between 1836 and 1845 Texans voted three times to join the US.

WORLD SUMMARY

90 killed in China rail collision

Beijing: Two passenger trains collided yesterday in China's central Hunan province, killing 90 people and injuring more than 300, the Xinhua news agency said. The crash occurred on one of China's main railway links between the capital and the southern town of Guangzhou.

One train, travelling north from the southwestern city of Kunming, capital of Yunnan province, to Zhengzhou, capital of central Henan province, collided with the rear of a stationary train. (Reuters)

Woman savaged

New York: A leopard that escaped from its cage at an animal sanctuary near Oklahoma City and killed a woman was shot dead by police marksmen. (Quentin Letts writes). The 70lb female Persian leopard was ambushed when she followed a baited trail that led back to her enclosure. Earlier, the cat had mauled to death Eunice Esquivel, 52, a Puerto Rican tourist.

Belgian strike

Brussels: Magistrates from Brussels and the francophone south of Belgium staged symbolic strikes in protest at accusations of incompetence in the country's child kidnapping, abuse and murder scandals. An official report accused them of sloth and a lack of professionalism. The last such strike was in 1989, over similar complaints. (Reuters)

Smoked out

Birobidzhan: A soldier is suspected of starting a series of explosions at an artillery depot in the Russian Far East by careless smoking. The Trans-Siberian railway was blocked and 4,000 people evacuated as metal fragments from explosions showered the area for two days. (AP)

Canada flood

Winnipeg: Red River floods surged into Canada, inundating the dyke-protected town of Ste Agathe, 15 miles south of Winnipeg. Most of the 500 residents had been evacuated. (AP)

Syrian nerve gas raises war fears

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

MIDDLE East peace efforts suffered another blow yesterday as Israel issued an unprecedented warning to President Assad after the disclosure that Syria has, with Russian aid, begun to manufacture a lethal new nerve gas.

David Levy, the Israeli Foreign Minister, reacted angrily, saying: "The other side must understand that it alone does not control something serious like this, but that we also control things that are seven times more serious."

If a minute quantity of the VX gas comes in contact with exposed skin it can kill in seconds. It permeates tight clothing and footwear and, once dispersed, can remain deadly for days or weeks.

Reports of the Syrian development came in the daily *Haaretz* and were later confirmed by Yitzhak Mordechai, the Defence Minister. Zeey Schiff, the newspaper's top defence specialist, said: "Syria has reached early stages of a

process by which the gas is mounted on surface-to-surface missiles it has stockpiled."

The Syrians already have large quantities of sarin, a gas that acts against the respiratory system. "This time they have entered a new area, a new gas named VX," Mr Schiff told Israel radio in an interview that spread anxiety among Israelis who regard a war with Syria as a strong possibility.

Mr Levy did not spell out in detail the weaponry involved in his threat. Israel has repeatedly

refused to comment on reliable foreign reports that a heavily guarded facility in a Tel Aviv suburb is working on advanced biological and chemical weapons. The extent of Israel's biological and chemical warfare capability is subject to a military censorship that is imposed on all correspondents. That censorship has failed to keep secret Israel's arsenal of at least 200 nuclear weapons which, in the last resort, could also be used in response to any Syrian attack.

Haaretz added that Syria had not signed an international chemical warfare agreement banning the manufacture and storage of chemical weapons that took effect yesterday. Iran and Israel have both signed, but, like Russia, have yet to ratify it.

The chemical warfare threat came as attempts to resume Israeli-Syrian peace talks remained deadlocked. Damascus refuses to go back to the negotiating table until Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, repeats a

pledge it claims was given by his Labour predecessors to return the whole of the occupied Golan Heights in exchange for peace. Mr Netanyahu has made clear that the strategic Golan plateau, conquered from Syria in the 1967 war, will not all be returned.

Yesterday Mr Mordechai told reporters that Israel had found out about the VX gas a few months ago. It is believed that there are chemical weapon plants close to Aleppo in northern Syria and outside Damascus. Israeli commanders are understood to have discussed a pre-emptive strike similar to that in 1981 against Iraq's nuclear reactor.

Mr Mordechai said of Syria's VX acquisition: "I discussed it with US Defence Secretary William Cohen during my last visit to the United States. I discussed it with the Government of the United Kingdom and I think all Western countries know what Syria is producing."

Levy has biological and nuclear weapons

Pentagon poised to cut forces by 50,000

FROM TOM RHODES
IN WASHINGTON

THE most comprehensive review of United States defences since the end of the Cold War is expected to result in a reduction of up to 50,000 American fighting troops as the Pentagon paves the way for a new generation of advanced weapons.

In what many US military commanders view as a series of drastic measures, the blueprint for American defence also seems certain to include substantial cuts in the US Air Force and Navy budgets for jet fighters.

The quadrennial defence review to be made public next month, may even reverse Pentagon doctrine designed to manage two "nearly simultaneous major regional conflicts" at the same time.

William Cohen, the US Defence Secretary, gave a clear signal this week that a robust modernisation programme was needed to shape the security environment, protect and promote America's national interests and combat terrorism and other uncertain threats in the future.

"We don't want to engage in a fair fight, a contemporary war of attrition. We want to dominate across the full spectrum of conflict so that if we ever do have to fight, we win on our terms," Mr Cohen said. "We are developing the kind of systems, the kind of leap-ahead technologies whereby we can in fact defend at a much further range away."

Pentagon officials said yesterday that payment for such global weaponry was certain to result in reduced force numbers. The current roster of active service troops stands at one and a half million, down by more than 30 per cent in the last decade.

The US Army is expected to be the hardest hit, losing up to 10 per cent of its 495,000 active duty soldiers, while there are likely to be demands on the joint US Air Force and Navy budgets of \$153 billion (204 billion). The cuts would help to pay for new technologies, including computerised artillery systems and biological weapons detectors. Mr Cohen has been told to maintain the \$250 billion-a-year Pentagon budget.

Hong Kong dabs attack protest ban

FROM JONATHAN MIRSKY
IN HONG KONG

A MAJORITY of Hong Kong's university teachers of law, politics and public administration will today present Tung Chee-hwa, the Executive-Designate, with a statement attacking his proposed laws to limit demonstrations and forbid financial links with foreign political bodies.

The statement, signed by more than 200 academics, rejects Mr Tung's contention that Hong Kong's "fragile" society can easily be shattered by public demonstrations or by foreigners attempting to subvert social order.

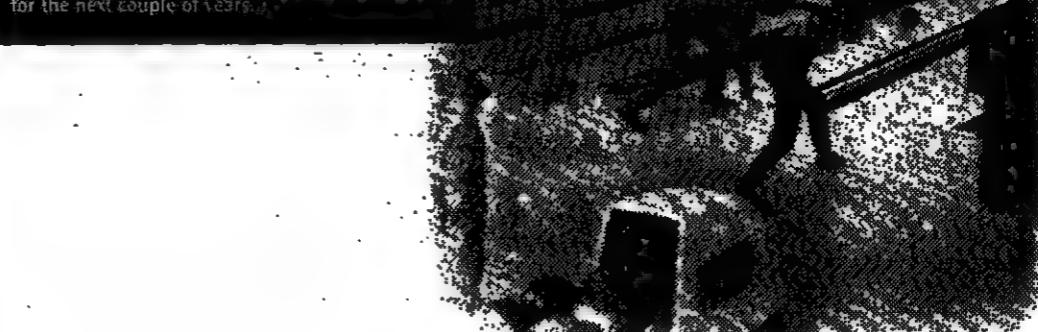
China's National People's Congress has voted to expunge Hong Kong's existing laws, which do not require police permission to demonstrate or forbid organisations and parties from receiving funds. The laws will cease on 1 July, the date of the handover.

The academics contend that Hong Kong people are rational and law-abiding and there is no threat to social order. But Mr Tung's proposed laws, they say, are a threat to individual rights.

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Women sue New York finance firm for \$110m

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

THREE women have filed a \$110 million (£65 million) lawsuit against a New York investment firm, claiming that they were sexually harassed and that the company's busy trading floor, scene of the alleged abuse, was known as "the pit".

The women claimed that male colleagues at Lev Lieberbaum & Co used them as "human towels", wiping their wet hands on their hair when they returned from the lavatory. Senior men at the company would allegedly unzip their trousers and demand oral sex, while others tugged at the women's clothes in the hope of catching a glimpse of their bodies or to "check" what they were wearing underneath.

Kimberly Casper, 26, Linette Cinelli, 25, and Diana Caliendo, 21, who were employed in varying support roles at the firm, were supported in their Manhattan Federal court lawsuit by the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Commentators said that the case may point to wider problems in the world of New York finance houses.

The company said that it would defend the allegations "vigorously". An unidentified male employee told the New York Post that the women, who no longer work at Lieberbaum, were simply interested in extracting some money from the company. "We're a friendly office, we joke around," he said.

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Europe returns envoys to Tehran with rebuke over Iran-sponsored terror

Iran's stance, by Behrendt in *De Telegraaf*, AmsterdamBY MICHAEL BINION
DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

EUROPEAN UNION foreign ministers agreed yesterday to return their ambassadors to Tehran. At the same time they announced the indefinite cancellation of Europe's high-level "critical dialogue" with Iran and a series of new restrictions in response to official Iranian support for terrorism.

All remaining Iranian intelligence agents are to be expelled from EU countries, and no visas will be granted to any Iranian with security or intelligence links. Visits by ministers to and from Iran are to be cancelled. The arms embargo against Iran will also be enforced.

The ministers said they had always wanted a constructive relationship with Iran, but "progress can only be made if the Iranian authorities respect the norms of international law and refrain from acts of terrorism, including against Iranian citizens living abroad, and co-operate in preventing such acts".

The new measures have been taken in the light of the Berlin court judgment this month that directly implicated senior Iranian officials in the murder of Kurdish exiles in a restaurant. The EU urged other countries to align themselves with the declaration.

"The message to Iran is clear: there can be no business as usual," the Foreign Office said. "We have taken

measures which seek to reinforce the message and which show that acts such as the Mykonos [restaurant] murders cannot go unanswered."

The EU measures do not call for any trade embargo or restrictions on EU investment in Iran and participation in Iranian trade. Diplomats said such proposals, advocated by Washington, were not discussed.

The International Rushdie Defence Committee, formed to fight the fatwa against the writer Salman Rushdie, yesterday condemned as "shocking" the decision to return ambassadors to Tehran, and said the action of the ministers "is not so much a slap on the wrist, it's more a nod and a wink to Iran. It sends a clear message that Iran can get away with murder in

Europe." Iranian exiles also criticised the EU's decision to send back ambassadors.

At a rally in Luxembourg organised by the National Council of Resistance of Iran, thousands of demonstrators called for the cutting of all commercial and diplomatic links with Tehran.

The National Council of Resistance, which maintains operational centres in Iraq and has engaged in an intensive lobbying campaign throughout Europe, welcomed the measures but said they did not go far enough.

Iranian state radio said yesterday that the measures would not affect the Islamic republic because of Iran's extensive relations with countries

outside the EU. "Neither attempts by the White House to isolate Iran nor decisions by the European Union will have any effect on the sacred government system of the Islamic Republic of Iran," state-run Tehran radio said in a commentary broadcast before the measures were officially announced.

In response to the end of the "critical dialogue", broken off immediately after the Berlin judgment, Iran's parliamentary foreign relations committee urged the Government to end all talks with the EU. It said such talks could be useful only when they were coupled with good intentions.

Leading article, page 23

Single currency battle dominates French election

FROM ADAM SAGE IN PARIS

EUROPE dominated the French parliamentary election campaign yesterday as new figures signalled more public spending cuts in the run-up to monetary union.

As the Gaullist-led coalition unveiled a manifesto that pledged reductions in tax, the National Statistical and Economic Institute said the public deficit exceeded forecasts last year.

Although the Government failed to meet its 4 per cent target by just 0.2 per cent, the difference will make it more difficult for France to meet an already tight timetable for joining economic and monetary union (EMU).

Economists said another round of austerity measures would be necessary if France was to fulfil Maastricht criteria which demand a deficit of no more than 3 per cent of gross national product.

Their warnings overshadowed the optimistic but vague promises made yesterday in the five-page manifesto presented by Alain Juppé, the Gaullist Prime Minister, and François Léotard, leader of the centrist UDF party.

They pledged to reduce income tax and reform business taxes, but did not make specific commitments. They also vowed to present a five-year plan to limit rises in public

spending to less than the rate of inflation, and encourage shorter working hours to create jobs.

M Juppé and M Léotard restated their commitment to join monetary union and said they would promote European social policies to "make France the motor of a citizens' Europe".

However, the centre-right coalition has tried to play down the European debate, aware that it is divided over the question and that many of its voters are hostile to Brussels. They say they need to curb public spending to improve French competitiveness and reduce an unemployment rate of 12.8 per cent, regardless of the single currency.

Edouard Balladur, the former Prime Minister, said yesterday: "Maastricht or not, we need to reduce our deficits, liberate our economy and reduce our taxes."

However, Europe continues to dominate the campaign. The publication of the 1996 public deficit calls into question M Juppé's claim that he has brought French public finances under control and can now move into a new tax-cutting phase.

The left-wing Opposition says President Chirac called the snap election in the knowledge that his Government

would have to introduce unpopular measures this autumn. Yesterday it was increasingly improbable France could meet the criteria for monetary union without additional savings.

Right-wing Eurosceptic voices are starting to make themselves heard. The anti-Maastricht campaigner, Philippe de Villiers, said: "Those who choose to sacrifice the nation to the single currency will lose that precious thing, the nation, and will gain euro-unemployment."

The Socialist leader, Lionel Jospin, has promised to increase public spending, compromising French chances of meeting the criteria on monetary union. But the impact of his message has been limited by Socialist splits over Europe.

M Jospin, who yesterday met his Communist counterpart, Robert Hue, to sign an electoral pact, knows many of his colleagues want him to respect Maastricht orthodoxy.

□ Copenhagen: Denmark's appeal court will hear charges brought by 11 citizens against the Prime Minister, Poul Rasmussen, on May 26. The 11 accuse him of violating the constitution by committing the country to the Maastricht treaty, judicial officials said. (AFP)

Murder of seized teenager angers Taiwan

FROM REUTER
IN TAIPEI

TAIWANESE were outraged yesterday by the murder of an actress' daughter who had been kidnapped on April 14.

The naked body of Pai Hsiao-yen, 17, only daughter of Pai Ping-ping, was found floating in a river in Taipei county late on Monday. Her hands and legs were bound with rope and she had been weighted down with hammers, police said.

Yang Jih-sung, the coroner, said she had died of strangulation and had been dead for at least eight days.

Her kidnappers had demanded a ransom equivalent to £3 million, including half of one of her little fingers with their note. Her mother, who is also a television chat show hostess, wanted to pay, but the kidnappers called off a planned meeting. Police arrested four people last Friday night, but three suspects remain at large.

Police and military agencies yesterday stepped up their island-wide search for the missing suspects and mounted stringent checks at sea ports and airports.

President Lee is extremely saddened. He is especially outraged by the criminals' inhuman method," the presidential office said. But the opposition New Party called on him to apologise to the public for Taiwan's deteriorating law and order.

The main opposition Democratic Progressive Party demanded the resignations of Lien Chan, the Prime Minister, Lin Feng-cheng, the Interior Minister, and Yan Ka-chiao, the National Police Administration chief.



Actress Pai Ping-ping, left, with her daughter, Hsiao-yen, not long before the kidnap

Chirac to seek ban on human cloning

BY ADAM SAGE

PRESIDENT CHIRAC of France is to seek an international agreement banning scientists from cloning humans.

The French President said yesterday that cloning "would in effect negate the very foundation of the identity and dignity of the human being". He described it as a degrading attack on the human condition and said: "It must be forbidden".

M Chirac said France would ask its European partners to adopt a declaration seeking a UN ban on human cloning. He would also raise the question with President Clinton at the next G7 summit in Denver in June.

"Some people imagine they will achieve immortality through cloning," the President said. "Others think they will be able to rediscover a loved one. Cloning has been spoken of as a new means of reproduction." His reaction was a "vehement, categorical, definitive and ethical condemnation of all reproductive cloning of human beings."

□ Bonn: German scientists, haunted by memories of Nazi attempts to engineer a "master race", urged that human cloning should be banned absolutely, everywhere and forever. "The cloning of humans would be a violation of human existence," Wolfgang Fruehwald, president of the German Research Association, said in Bonn. (Reuter)

Bomb raid plea to Chechnya

FROM ROBIN LODGE IN MOSCOW

ANATOLI KULIKOV, the Russian Interior Minister, yesterday accused the new leaders of Chechnya of sponsoring terrorism, after two bomb attacks on railway stations in southern Russia and a reported attack on a Russian border post.

General Kulikov appealed to President Maskhadov of Chechnya to "get rid of terrorists in his entourage" and spoke of a possible anti-Chechen backlash from the Russian population. "I would like to appeal to the people of Russia to comply strictly with the law, to help the law enforcement agencies and not to allow any lynching to happen," he said.

He was speaking after a

bomb explosion on Monday at a station in Pyatigorsk at Russia's North Caucasus region. Two people were killed and 17 injured. General Kulikov confirmed reports that two Chechen women had been arrested on suspicion of planting the bomb. He said they were known to have taken part in the hostage-taking raid on the south Russian town of Budyenovsk in June 1995, when more than 100 people were killed.

The commander of Russian forces in the North Caucasus reported that a police check-point on the border between Chechnya and Dagestan had come under attack on Monday from about 20 Chechen gunmen. A three-hour gun battle

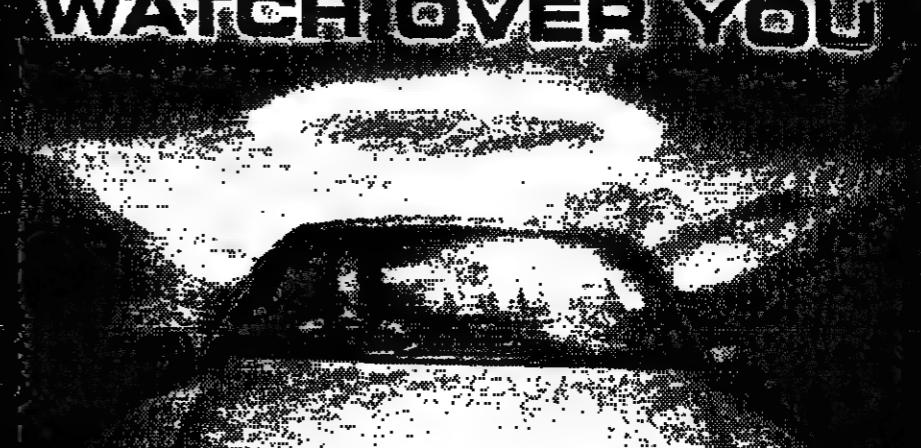
had caused an unspecified number of casualties.

The Pyatigorsk bomb followed a similar blast at a railway station in the southern town of Armavir, which killed two people and injured eight. The authorities link the attacks with a threat by Salman Raduyev, a renegade Chechen commander, to wage a war of terror to avenge the death of the rebel leader, Dzhokhar Dudayev, a year ago.

President Yeltsin warned the Chechen authorities of a sharp deterioration in relations if they did not crack down on terrorism. He ordered strict security measures in the region. The Chechen authorities deny involvement in the attacks.

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Aid staff catalogue 'barbarities' of Zaire rebel forces

FROM DAVID ORR IN NAIROBI

AS REBELS in Zaire push towards Kinshasa, the capital, details are emerging of alleged human rights violations in territory under their control. Crimes of murder, rape and looting have long been blamed on the ill-disciplined Zairean Army, but until now allegations of atrocities by the rebels have been few.

The lengthening list of barbarities ascribed to Laurent Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire is revealed in two confidential aid agency reports obtained by *The Times*. So sensitive are the contents, and so fearful are the organisations of rebel retribution against their staff, that it is not possible to quote at length from the reports.

Those who have suffered most at rebel hands are Rwandan refugees unable or unwilling to return to the homeland they fled after the 1994 genocide. However, there are

also numerous allegations of atrocities directed at Zairean civilians in areas occupied by Mr Kabila's forces.

The confidential reports allege that crimes against both Rwandan refugees and Zairean civilians started long before concerns arose over the fate of tens of thousands of refugees still missing in the forests near Kisangani. The information, gathered on aid agency missions in eastern Zaire, points to a systematic campaign of extermination of refugees and of intimidation of Zaireans in rebel territory.

Mr Kabila has dismissed allegations that his fighters have slaughtered large numbers of the Rwandan refugees.

One aid agency document obtained by *The Times* refers to indications that "serious violations" of international humanitarian and human rights laws have taken place, and are continuing, in areas controlled by the rebels.

Most of Rwanda's refugees returned home last year, but some moved deeper into the

Zairean interior ahead of the advancing Zairean rebels. Among the refugees are believed to be a hard core of Hutu militiamen who participated in Rwanda's genocide.

Local people in the Shabunda area visited by the aid agency are said to suffer intimidation and threats from the rebels. According to one report, villagers have been told not to help the refugees but to persuade them to come into the open.

The intimidation campaign was reportedly stepped up by the rebels after an "ideological

seminar" in Shabunda in March, which all regional community chiefs were obliged to attend. The aid agency mission collected evidence that Zaireans who subsequently sheltered refugees were killed.

"It seems clear the military

have a very clear, well defined and systematic mission of 'cleaning' the area," says another report by a British aid agency. This also gives details of massacres of Zairean civilians and Rwandan refugees.

■ Nice: A French court sentenced 'Ramazani' Baya,

Abducted children 'taken for slaughter'

BY SAM KILEY, AFRICA CORRESPONDENT

HUTU children close to starvation were slung into the back of a lorry "like sacks of potatoes" and abducted by Tutsi soldiers in eastern Zaire, United Nations officials said yesterday, as fears grew that the youngsters had been slaughtered.

Sources at the United Nations Children's Fund and other agencies connected with the Lwiro children's hospital, said the Tutsi soldiers fired into the air, beat up two nurses, abducted 50 children and 60 adults, and drove off in a lorry, threatening that they

would be back. "Some of the soldiers said that the young [Rwandan] Hutu refugees would grow up to be killers and that they should therefore die," one relief worker said, quoting a witness in the small town close to Butavu, in South Kivu province.

Another source said that the toddlers — close to death as a result of malnutrition after seven months on an aimless trek through Zaire's jungles ahead of the Tutsi advance — were thrown into the lorry "like sacks of potatoes".

They will not live long without expert medical care," said a relief worker associated with the hospital.

The children have not been seen since they were abducted last week and most aid workers said that they feared the worst.

There have been reports that they may have been killed," Pamela O'Toole, a spokeswoman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, said.

Kabila agrees to talks with Mobutu on ship

Lubumbashi: Zaire's rebel leader, Laurent Kabila, said yesterday that he had agreed to meet President Mobutu on a ship in the Atlantic, off Zaire's coast, to discuss a transfer of power in Kinshasa.

Mr Kabila said: "I have agreed to President Nelson Mandela's request that I meet Mr Mobutu on a ship off the Atlantic coastline to discuss Mr Mobutu's departure," saying the ship would be a South African Navy vessel.

The ship said to have been chosen for the talks, the *SAS Outeniqua*, bought cheaply from Russia in 1993, is the depleted South African Navy's

newest, and has been dubbed "the Grey Diplomat" because of previous humanitarian missions.

"As far as I am concerned, this will be a short ceremony at which Mr Mobutu is supposed to agree to leave, otherwise our forces now advancing on the route to Kinshasa will eject him," Mr Kabila said. "I am made to believe he [Mobutu] will operate with us and avoid a bloody confrontation for Kinshasa."

Asked about the date for their first face-to-face meeting, he said it would be in the next few days. (Reuters)

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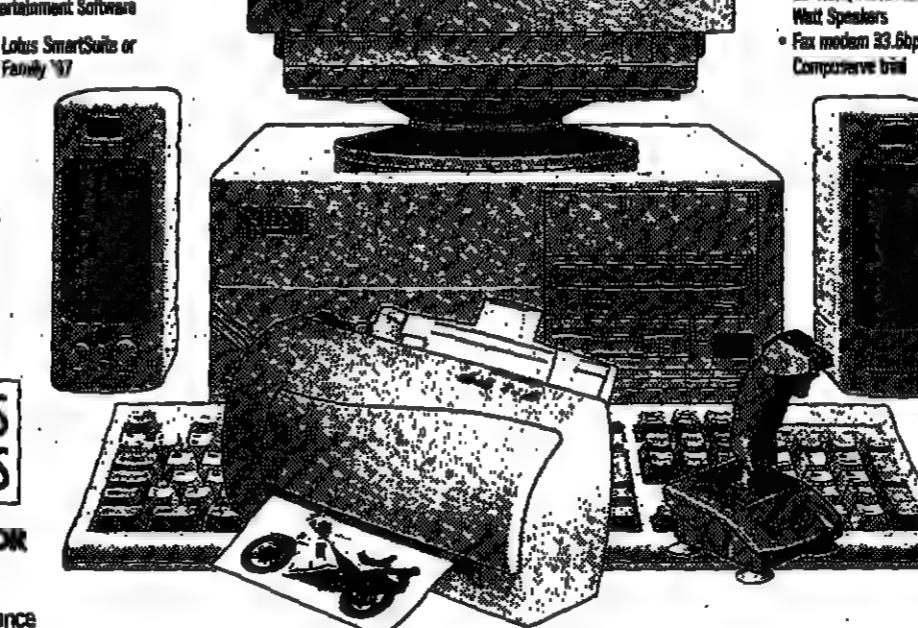
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Sugared, Spiced, dangerous

The Spice Girls may be the stuff of little girls' fantasy, but their message needs to be challenged

Everyone goes on about the rudeness of contemporary society and the young, the decline of manners and the cult of coarseness, but it is indubitably the case that the real message behind popular culture is *Do Not Offend*.

Given all that talk about *Girl Power*, you'd think that now the Spice Girls have been attacked for performing the *haka* war dance on the grounds that this is a sacred ritual, and that only men are allowed to do it, they would at least put forward a political defence, even a phoney one. I do see that claiming it as a step forward for feminism, or a triumph for the sisterhood, might be going it a bit. But I'm not sure that coming over all breathy and tearful is quite what we need either.

But we are all required to be tolerant of intolerance these days, and if a Maori is offended then there is evidently no explanation or exhortation — such as lightening up — that will suffice. Maybe it's because when I was the age of the average Spice Girl, punk was the dominant discordant note of pop culture, but it does seem

quoting Marcel Proust, oddly, on the subject. (Though who am I to talk, unsettled as I am to find myself writing about them now?) But the thing about phenomena is that they are fleeting. And they are not quite believable.

Actually, I do believe that people are genuinely keen on them — if they're short enough, I have evidence of this. If I walk my three-year-old daughter (who affects a *haka en bas* interest) to nursery, I have to fight my way through a playground full of would-be Spice Girls working out their dance routines.

Apart from little girls (and the Paul Johnson contingent), who has any time for them at all? Have you ever met such a person? I am prepared to believe that there are those out of teenform bras who buy their records, just as I am prepared to believe there are people who own a Teasmaid. But in both cases, they are the stuff of cliché.

The reason that is given for the Spice Girls' mass popularity is the reason they do not in fact, enjoy, among even young adults, mass popularity. It is their ordinariness that is meant to seduce: we are all meant to identify. And look, how clever! We can pick our girl — posh spice, sporty spice and so on. Roland Barthes couldn't have done it better if he'd set up the group himself. But the difficulty with seeming to present the ordinary girl is that which ordinary girl wants to be ordinary?

The point about stage icons is that they are not ordinary; or even if they are, they are not meant to seem so. This, though, is the modern dilemma about fame.

To be famous is to be special, but to be special is to be envied. Everyone wants to be a regular guy (and I use the term to denote the female, too), and to be famous for being just a regular guy is therefore supremely desirable. But to be special and ordinary at the same time is confusing — and confusing, because there is an essential contradiction that, in the end, even the dimmest fan can fathom. The only way to apologise for one's fame is to protest how little it is justified.

Naturally, sometimes those protestants have a point, but that is only part of the story. The dominating neurosis of the day (and one peculiarly exhibited by the modern campaigning politician) on a psychological though perhaps not neurological hiding to nothing) is the frenzied desire to please, to be impossibly acceptable to the varied multitude.

In these terms, the Spice Girls are a flattering enough concept, though the plodding literalness of the construct is amusing in the same way the completely baffling postured literalness of choreography of the sadly defunct Pan's People



Innocent, frolicsome girliness — or propaganda with a pernicious sexual message? Nigella Lawson believes there are dangers and contradictions in the posturings of the Spice Girls

Nigella Lawson

strange to me that the most successful group of the moment has one aim: to seem nice.

But then again, the Spice Girls are also described as "professional". And the term is thus used as a commendation. What is the world coming to when a pop group is meant to behave like a cluster of suburban office workers going up West clubbing for the night?

I have noticed that fellow performers — and most recently George Michael, as he discussed the setting up of his own record label — don't refer to the Spice Girls as musicians, or even performers, particularly, but as a "phenomenon".

I have no strong feelings one way or another about them, but it is surely to the point that to be a real fan you need to be under 14 or over 65. The rest of us can hardly be blamed for failing to see the charms of these *jeunes filles en fleur*, to quote a besotted Paul Johnson

was. Now there, while we're on the subject, was a girl-group with which one would want to identify. The stereotyping — the blonde, the brunette and so forth — was no less crude than that of the Spice Girls, but the actual personifications of these types were more desirable.

Little girls aspire to be big girls, and so for them the Spice Girls are the stuff of fantasy.

But for women the same age, the Spice Girls are hardly aspirational figures. The PR reckoning behind this counts on everyone, therefore, not rebranding their fame, but rather it works in reverse: everyone resents it. Why them?

If there is an implicit double standard in the modern cult of celebrity and the contemporaneous championing of the ordinary, there is another, essentially more pernicious, contradiction in the presentation of sexuality. The protestations of *Girl Power*, the bosom-bulging basques and pelvis-thrusting, are ostensibly all about empowered, aggressive sexuality. But in fact what is being presented is that whiney, look-don't-touch form of self-absorbed inflation. In other words, they embody the dangerous belief that it is acceptable to appear sexually available, but unacceptable to be treated as sexually available. And please, don't write in to tell me that just because someone shows her cleavage she doesn't deserve to be molested. That goes without saying — but the sanctimonious packaging of female sexuality is all the same irksome, and more dangerous.

For some reason parents of pre-teen girls who copy such posturings go along with all this, wrongly seeing in it an innocent frolicsome girliness. This is the cream bun school of bottom wiggling: naughty but nice. That's how the Spice Girls have been happy to present themselves, too. They must not know what's hit them now: someone's taken them seriously — even if it is some disgruntled Maori leader unacquainted with their oeuvre.

The man with the real lead in the polls

How can the opinion polls be so certain? I've never met anyone who was questioned by a pollster.

This is the sort of remark commonly heard at general election time. It is a view found among the droves of letters that the Editor of *The Times* is now receiving about the real polls.

Not only is extreme scepticism expressed about basing national projections on the opinions of so few, but many people seem to delight when the opinion polls, or some of them, end up with egg on their faces, as in 1992 and 1970. If,

tomorrow, the first news from the real polls shows that the canvassers were wrong, there will surely be some cheers, and not just from Tories.

Some doubters scarcely

believe that the polled sample exists. Doubt not. In the past few months I have been tackled three times by the

pollsters.

Not long before John Major named the day, I was strolling in my Surrey suburb late one Friday morning when a woman looking for directions called to me from a parked car. It turned out that she was in the street she wanted. She explained that she worked for MORI (*The Times*'s choice of pollster, headed by the dubious Robert Worcester) and thus would be attempting to interview 16 people of different "types", living in some ten named local streets.

It emerged that my house was in a street that had been picked and I readily agreed to be out for most of the rest of the day, so we conducted the canvass in her car.

Although she started with political questions, including the one we all know and love — "If there were a general election tomorrow, which party would you support?" — most of the survey was probably for commercial purposes.



Interviewee Ivan Barnes
There were two themes, the first concerning mostly large, well-known companies. Questions were along the lines of "How much do you know about the operations of [about eight companies listed]?" "Is your perception that [each company] is — very efficient; efficient; inefficient; very inefficient?"

I found that I was spending

half my time trying consciously to answer the questions and the other half trying to imagine what the purpose of all this could be. The pollster did not rush me but the questioning moved ahead quite briskly and, distracted as I was by my own speculations, I felt sure at one point that I had claimed "a little" knowledge of a company that did not exist. (Had the devious MORI backroom persons put in a booby trap? I imagined them chuckling over my

The Letters Editor of *The Times*, Ivan Barnes, wonders why he has been approached by the pollsters three times

answers and throwing them in the waste paper basket.)

My conclusion was that one of the companies was worried about its public image but wanted MORI to make sure that things were sufficiently bad before it decided how to set about repairing the damage. I felt quietly confident that I had spotted the "guilty" party.

Similarly, there were a number of questions about South American countries.

These (the questions, not the countries) were rather boring and seemed completely disconnected. I began to see myself as a don't know, or possibly a don't care.

Although this was more difficult, I was fairly confident that I could spot the client country/tourist office involved. Again, I took this to be

part of a name-recognition or image-building exercise.

But who knows? Bob Worcester's merry crew have doubtless filed the process with false trails, if not false companies, to lead the curious astray. The pollster was discreet itself. Whenever I asked questions of my own, she politely but firmly took us straight back to the MORI matter in hand. The whole thing took just over half an hour. It was all most enjoyable and we parted almost like old friends.

My second encounter with MORI was shortly before Easter. I had just moved to a house in Southwark, not far from London Bridge. As I was struggling with my key and an armful of books on the doorstep, I was approached by a polite, middle-aged man who wanted to canvass me.

Wonderful. With the election campaign well under way, here was my chance to

on leaving the Army Museum in Chelsea, I was stopped (by MORI, of course) to provide information about my moseying habits and my interest in individual military campaigns. This was interesting but it could hardly make up for being left out of the general election campaign.

The question remains as to why MORI keeps picking on me. One of my daughters says there must be a shortage of stooped, grumpy, balding 55 to 65-year-olds and that MORI pollsters have difficulty meeting their norm. I put it down to personal magnetism and charm. Or is Bob Worcester having me followed?

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Alan Coren



■ Up with the lark? No: a little bird rang me

Tomorrow will be a very big day. Tomorrow will be just about as big as days get. Tomorrow will be the dawn of a new era. That is because tomorrow will be the era of a new dawn.

Yes, from tomorrow, each and every one of you, wherever you live, will be able to dial 0891 555178 and hear the dawn chorus. You will be able to lie snug in your cot, poke your keypad, and listen to chaff-chaff and willow-warbler, cuckoo and robin, blackbird and woodpecker, nightingale and tit, all at like knives. You will, moreover, not be required to do this at dawn, for it is a round-the-clock service, and should you so wish you can listen to the dawn chorus prior to turning in, and thus get it out of the way in good time, or, if you have had a heavy night and slept late, you will be able to dial the dawn chorus at noon, having missed nothing.

For this unprecedented privilege, you will owe your heartfelt thanks to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, who set it up, and £1 to BT, who saw the RSPB coming. It is a small price to pay, especially as the RSPB also throws in a Mr Peter Holden, who tells you, as they severally trill, what each component of the dawn chorus is: I have heard a preview tape, and he points out, for example, that what has just exploded in the bush behind him is a wren, and that the great tit is the one which sounds like a bicycle pump, a thoughtful observation for listeners who might otherwise have grown concerned at the possibility that Mr Holden's Rudge had run over a broken jam-jar while he was pedalling bravely through the aubadial chill, waving his tape-recorder on all our behalves, in hot pursuit of a finch.

The tape has the further great virtue of lasting less than two minutes. It thus differs markedly from the real thing in — to pluck an example at random — Cricklewood, where, thanks to street lighting visible from Hale-Bopp and passing cars blasting the ghetto all night, dawn begins at sunset, so that, down here, disorientated tits may start pumping their tyres up at any time, and wrens go bang on an entirely capricious basis, never mind flocks of magpies which can bring light sleepers suddenly jack-knifing upright from their sacks at half-past three.

From tomorrow on, however, it will be possible to stick earplugs in, insulating you from all this racket, to get a good night's kip, and phone the dawn chorus while you're shaving. Nor, I very much hope, will BT's caring enterprise stop there: how very pleasant it would be, in spring, to phone the Croaking Frogline, or in autumn, particularly after hunting goes to its inevitable doom, to dial a nostalgic two minutesworth of horn, hoots, baying and dismemberment. Which is not, of course, to ignore the ethnic multiplicity of Britain: I myself have many friends and neighbours, now branched poignantly far from their exotic roots, who would, I'm certain, relish the opportunity to ring some 0891 number for the sunset chorus of okapi padding down to the water-hole, the lion's roar, the hippo's yawn, the rhino's belch, while others yearn to hear again the crash of tigers through the Bengal undergrowth or the redolent note — not unlike a bicycle pump, actually — of an elderly koala regurgitating a eucalyptus leaf.

As for myself — and I speak here as both an animal lover and a BT shareholder — I should most like to be able to phone a dog, but they're frightful liability, they have to be schooled, they have to be walked, they have to be vetted, they have to be groomed, they bite people, they chase cats, they foul footpaths, they eat that gashly jelloid muck you have to spoon out for them, and this strikes me as a great deal of trouble to go to just to enjoy their companionship. But having a dog on the other end of the phone whenever you wanted would be just the ticket: if you felt lonely, you could ring it up, it would bark, it would pant, it would bring sticks to the phone, you would say good boy, good dog, all that stuff, and there'd be no hairs on the furniture or coppers ringing up to say they'd just prised it off the A41. I shall give BT a bell right now. It pays to talk.



Nothing common or mean

As John Major goes to the scaffold with dignity, the era of Thatcherism closes

At a public meeting a year ago, somebody asked Tony Blair what he would do after the election if he lost. Mr Blair was then said slowly and with evident sincerity, "I think I should be... very unhappy."

As of now, Mr Blair's happiness seems secure. The jury in the case of the Tory Government is still back to a packed courtroom. The judge is fingering his black cap. In normal circumstances the condemned man would have time for a square meal, a confession and a last wish. But British general elections are brutal affairs. Death is instantaneous. The removal van will arrive on Friday and 18 years of British history will be pulped, with no one even sorting the dry waste from the wet. The last cry of the famous, "Speak well of me when I'm gone!" will die on John Major's lips amid the slamming of gates and the plaudits of another man's victory.

If only we could have nice elections. Rarely have two such decent men as Mr Major and Mr Blair faced each other at the hustings — and been obliged to speak so ill of each other. The past week's charges, that Labour would disunite the kingdom and the Tories would end the National Health Service, struck new lows in electoral mendacity. By Friday this will be as chaff in the wind. Unless something most strange happens, Mr Blair will be triumphant and a new age will dawn. So, on the final day of what historians will refer to as "Britain 1979-97", let us grant the condemned man his last wish. Let us speak well of him.

Mr Major's weaknesses have always concealed his strengths. No political leader since the war was dealt a tougher hand on taking office. After Margaret Thatcher's assassination in November 1990, he was charged by his colleagues only to be different. I recall a Cabinet minister, the blood still wet on his hands, crying that enough was enough. The revolution needed a rest. The party must consolidate. Mr Major was the candidate of the whips' office, of the soft option. Ministers longed to enter the Cabinet room without feeling sick in their stomachs.

When Margaret Thatcher said that Mr Major was her anointed, that he was "pure gold", I shuddered for him. She was not just bequeathing a vague ism called Thatcherism; she left him with a war in Iraq, a poll tax, a devilish European treaty to negotiate, a fixed

exchange rate for sterling and a 10-point deficit in the opinion polls. Mr Major quietly set about his business. He won the war. He rid himself of poll tax, secured the Maastricht opt-out clauses and brought his party against all odds to a fourth election victory in 1992. All this he effected with a dogged dignity. He also scrambled untidily out of the privatisations, childcare, old people's services and the London Underground. In education and penal policy I would put Mr Major to the right of Lady Thatcher. She was chary of offending the pretensions. She endorsed the Hurd-Clarke liberal era at the Home Office. Mr Major brushed it aside. Whitehall privatised anything that moved or stood still, the Stationery Office, the Naafi, Greenwich Palace, even Admiralty Arch. Fresh breezes blew through the unreconstructed public sector, including the law, the Armed Forces, Oxbridge and the BBC.

On Monday, British truck-drivers caught by the fishing blockade were being fined for driving in France over the weekend. Many Britons were incredulous. They did not realise that such commercial freedom is no longer allowed on the Continent. Trucks may not be driven at the weekend in France or Germany. Machinery cannot be worked through the night. Sit next to any continental businessman and he will comment on such "unfair" differences between British companies and comparable ones abroad, in airlines, printing, construction, entertainment and financial services. That difference is not just a difference between Britain now and Britain 1979. It is between Britain and the rest of Europe. The difference is rooted in policy. In over a decade of state law reform and enforced competition, the supply-side reforms of the 1980s endured into the 1990s. It entrenched the culture of competition and the stripping out of trade union protectionism. Had the Tories lost in 1992, Neil Kinnock's Labour Party would have undone much of the work of the 1987 Parliament. There would have been no further

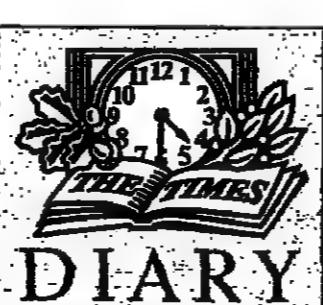
privatisations. Britain would have signed the social chapter of Maastricht. Mr Major did not just mark time. Each Queen's Speech held new horrors for the Left and delights for the Right, as did the recent manifesto. The Cabinet plunged, carelessly of popularity, into the privatisations of pensions, childcare, old people's services and the London Underground. In education and penal policy I would put Mr Major to the right of Lady Thatcher. She was chary of offending the pretensions. She endorsed the Hurd-Clarke liberal era at the Home Office. Mr Major brushed it aside. Whitehall privatised anything that moved or stood still, the Stationery Office, the Naafi, Greenwich Palace, even Admiralty Arch. Fresh breezes blew through the unreconstructed public sector, including the law, the Armed Forces, Oxbridge and the BBC.

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Mr Major was able to maintain the Thatcher legacy because she had already blazed the trail through as yet uncharted jungle. By 1990 she was exhausted and hesitant. She had lost the confidence of her Cabinet and was well adrift in the polls. She bitterly protested afterwards that "nobody ever voted me

as the MP there after 14 years. Hurd sauntered in with 12 supporters, ordered coffee and biscuits for the lot of them and then moved on again accompanied by his mob. Not a thought for the bill of £9.10. "I just couldn't believe it," said Brad Berridge, 24, the assistant manager. "They drank their coffee then strolled out." Only after a complaint was made to the local Conservative office did Hurd's replacement as Tory candidate, Shaun Woodward, turn up to pay — two days late.

■ An improbable inspiration for John Major comes in the form of



would not have done a disservice to Lester Piggott. Haden-Guest approached the horse and attempted to mount it — only to be prevented at the last minute from doing so by minders (of the animal), who feared that he might slip out of the saddle and sue for damages. Non-sense, of course: H-G was so well-oided that he would hardly have felt a fall.

■ That's Life

LORD HADEN-GUEST'S bibulous brother Anthony has been holding a succession of New York parties to plug his book *The Last Party*. One was held at Life, a trendy Manhattan club, where the management laid on a white charger to evoke the horse that Bianca Jagger once rode into a 1970s discotheque. Haden-Guest, squinting uncertainly at the nag, temporarily lost his bearings and believed himself to be in the saddle enclosure at Goodwood rather than in some late-night down-town bar.

Nobody could have been more welcome at the Eagle Vaults pub in the constituency of Witney, Oxfordshire, than the former Foreign Secretary, who is standing down

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■ Inoperative

COULD this be the first class-conflict to trouble brother Blair and his new Labour government? The black-tied ranks of the Royal Opera House appear to have irreconcilable differences with the workers backstage.

Yesterday, the negotiations between the management and the technicians' union collapsed over working arrangements for when the opera moves out of Covent Garden during the two-year redevelopment.

The union wants "touring" money — the opera is planning to move around London and occasionally overseas — but the management points out that it has a finite budget and adds that a few stops down the Piccadilly line doesn't exactly constitute a tour. May I suggest that champagne socialists take their fun elsewhere?

P.H.S.

Wrinkles on Labour highbrows

The intelligentsia won't betray Blair, insists Ben Pimlott

Whatever has happened in this non-cerebral campaign to left-wing intellectuals? In the past, no election was complete without some egghead or other popping up to remind the redneck British electorate of its atavism. "A period of silence would be appreciated," Clement Attlee famously growled to Professor Harold Laski in a 1940s version of the new Labour doctrine of sewn-up lips.

In 1997, a period of silence is precisely what the intellectuals have provided. As Sir Alfred Sherman indicated (perhaps unintentionally) in yesterday's letters column, attempts to present them as disenchanted have fallen flat.

It is true that some have mixed feelings — as a survey of recent contributors to the *New Statesman* revealed. One commented that he will be backing Blair, but will need "a crate of Remmies to settle my stomach first". In general, however, there has been little rocking of the boat.

A cynic might say this is because the old left-wing intelligentsia no longer exists. Marxism has vanished, social democracy is in disarray without any faith to adhere to, so it is harder to accuse the leadership of heresy. Another explanation is the proliferation of Fabian-style pressure groups, which have absorbed much of the energy that once went into writing electoral suicide notes.

However, the main reason undoubtedly is a less-than-grudging expectancy. "The long night is over," in Edward Carpenter's words. "England is risen and the day is here." Intellectuals may not like all they see or don't see in the Labour manifesto. But at such a wondrous moment, quibbles are inappropriate.

There has certainly been a shift in the nature of intellectual support for Labour. In both 1945 and 1964 it was based on a belief in experimentation and "gradualism": people knew a Labour Government didn't herald Utopia, but they saw it as a step along the road. In those days, intellectuals talked progressively, about taking a sluggish country in a radically new direction. Now there is a desire to bring a country in which radical absurdity has got out of hand back to sanity.

In the past, too, manifestos set out programmes. This one looks like a cross between a hymn and a blank cheque. Yet blank cheques have their attractions. Students of 20th-century history are able to point out that the doctrine of the election "mandate" requires a government to carry out what it promises, not to refrain from doing what it doesn't. Thus many of Labour's *sotto voce* intellectuals argue that once the election is in the bag, a thousand flowers will bloom. The excitement and desire for change will be impossible to keep down. The new mood will be signalled, they predict, by a spontaneous singing of *The Red Flag* by MPs on the day the new House of Commons assembles.

There is, of course, the allegation that some kinds of backing aren't to be taken at face value. "Kick out the Tories. Don't trust Blair. Vote Labour" says a leaflet advertising a Socialist Worker rally — much in the spirit of Lenin, who once told British comrades to back Labour "as a rope supports a hanged man". Today's intellectuals, however, are not contemplating a post-electoral execution. Rather, they see Mr Blair as a facilitator, and a Blair victory as a gateway. They are irritated by appeals for trust. But they are glad of the would-be premier's youth and energy, as well as of his proven effectiveness as party leader.

There are other things. In particular, they are heartened by the priority given to education while biting their lips over an insultingly inadequate paragraph on universities, where many of them work. They see the prospect of even modest constitutional reform as promising. They especially applaud Labour's openness on Europe (and deplore any trepidation tendency to backtrack).

They long for an Herculean flushing of the governmental stable and they see new Labour as a kind of political Harpic. On this they are unashamedly vengeful: they relish the Tory collapse, the end of smirking and strutting, the ensuing civil war. They hope, vaguely, that somebody really awful, such as John Redwood, will become leader of the Conservative Party.

Intellectuals are a superior lot. They look grimly at the quality of some members of Labour's frontbench team. Yet they regard half-a-dozen or so members of the Shadow Cabinet as hopefully, and they anticipate that the first reshuffle will see the promotion of bright up-and-comers. Their imaginations range widely. Just as the Attlee and Wilson Governments changed the social atmosphere in Britain, creating a climate in which new ideas thrived and old prejudices were banished forever, so they believe that a millennium Labour government will — perhaps despite itself — loosen constraints. The 1970s brought an acceptance of the State's social responsibility, the 1980s the permissive revolution. Neither was predicted; what, then, wonder, will the 2000s bring?

They don't have the answer: they look forward to tomorrow night with the excitement of a child considering a gift that could be, who knows, a jack-in-the-box — offering something fun, startling, and barely imaginable. They will, this time — be more solidly behind Labour than at any election since 1964.

Next time is another matter. If new Labour turns out to be a new disappointment, they will be unforgiving.

Professor Pimlott is a former chairman of the Fabian Society and a biographer of Harold Wilson.

High fashion

DIARIES perhaps as sensational as those of Sir Roy Strong or Alan Clark could soon be on display in Britain's bookshops. The journals of the late fashion designer Ossie Clark are likely to be published, thanks to the persuasive power of David Hockney.

Clark, who was fatally stabbed by his male lover last August, had been assiduous at keeping his diaries since the mid 1980s. He had designed special pockets in his tweed jackets so as to carry a

jotting book at all times, and at parties he would invite inebriated friends to make contributions.

More than a dozen volumes, chronicling intimate secrets of such friends from the 1960s as Mick Jagger, Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, Britt Eckland, Brigitte Bardot, Andy Warhol and Hockney himself, are owned by Clark's eldest son, Albert, a head chef in west London.

Albert and his close family had decided not to publish, even



Hockney, and his portrait of the designer Ossie Clark

That's Life

LORD HADEN-GUEST'S bibulous brother Anthony has been holding a succession of New York parties to plug his book *The Last Party*. One was held at Life, a trendy Manhattan club, where the management laid on a white charger to evoke the horse that Bianca Jagger once rode into a 1970s discotheque. Haden-Guest, squinting uncertainly at the nag, temporarily lost his bearings and believed himself to be in the saddle enclosure at Goodwood rather than in some late-night down-town bar.

Nobody could have been more welcome at the Eagle Vaults pub in the constituency of Witney, Oxfordshire, than the former Foreign Secretary, who is standing down

Runneth over

WITH sleaze flying about by the bucketload, Douglas Hurd is the sort of staunch figure to remind Conservative voters of the decency with which politicians once conducted their campaigns.

Nobody could have been more



What do you mean, you don't know?



INVISIBLE ELECTION

The other ballot that is taking place tomorrow

Whatever else may be the legacy of the Conservatives' 18-year tenure, few would be satisfied with the state of local government. The combination of a Treasury intent on absolute command of public spending and Margaret Thatcher's determination to deal with certain hard-left Labour administrations has left local democracy in a sorry condition. The sledgehammer of Whitehall control may have cracked some pseudo-Marxist nuts but has unhinged the balance between centre and periphery in the process.

Tomorrow most English voters will receive two ballot papers at their polling station. They could be forgiven for expressing surprise. The fate of 3,213 council seats will be contested. In most places this election will be fought on radically redrawn boundaries. Many counties have been reorganised: urban areas such as Derby, Leicester, and Southampton have been separated from the rest of their counties. As of 1998 they will become independent, unitary, authorities. The remaining rural and suburban components will continue much as before. This will also be news to much of the electorate.

National politicians determined that local boundaries needed modification. In Scotland and Wales, Whitehall decided that a single tier of government was the optimal solution. In England a different strategy was adopted. A local government commission emerged with the mission of consultation and their recommendation. The Government had thought that its creature would support the widespread introduction of unitary authorities here as well. To the irritation of all concerned at the Department of the Environment, opinion at the grassroots was actually solicited and sometimes accepted. The final outcome was a complex mixture of alternative systems. That mosaic encounters the electorate tomorrow.

This has been the third time in 25 years that a Conservative Prime Minister has accepted responsibility for the structure of local government. Edward Heath destroyed

a century of tradition, abolished historic counties and moved around their borders, in pursuit of the "perfect" size of local unit. Margaret Thatcher dismissed the Greater London Council and the metropolitan counties because she did not care for the likes of Ken Livingstone. Now John Major has had his turn. Some of the new inventions will be more popular than their predecessors. Others will be alien to their residents. All the new authorities will raise 20 per cent of their own revenues. Even then, those councils will face numerous restrictions on how such money is spent.

A campaign conducted on boundaries largely chosen elsewhere, for the right to distribute funds on a formula largely designed elsewhere, was always unlikely to inspire mass attention. In recent local elections turnout has fallen below 40 per cent. With a general election this year, participation will be higher but profile even lower. Tomorrow's council contests have been rendered invisible. Despite the fact that practical decisions on crime, education, and social services must be taken by local politicians, the national parties have had no qualms about co-opting all three areas as private fiefdoms. It is assumed that to the victor goes the spoils of local democracy.

The Conservatives may now suffer for their own attitude. The devaluation of local government has dried up a source of party activists. The Tories have been hammered in four consecutive council elections. They will not field candidates in 10 per cent of all seats tomorrow: 16 per cent in the new unitary authorities. Labour will be represented in 97 per cent of cases. That badly diminished manpower and eroded local base may prove critical for parliamentary contenders. This alone should prompt them to reconsider their centralist instincts. If the Conservatives are evicted from office this week they will doubtless move swiftly to the leadership question. They would do well to consider the local democracy issue with equal intensity.

LICENCE TO MURDER

The EU shows its tolerance of Iranian terror

The European Union is to send its ambassadors back to Tehran barely a month after they were withdrawn in disgust at Iran's officially sanctioned murder of dissident Kurdish exiles in Berlin. At the same time the EU announced yesterday the formal suspension of its "critical dialogue" with Tehran, the expulsion of any remaining Iranian intelligence agents in Europe and an end to ministerial visits to and from Tehran. These pusillanimous measures include nothing about trade, make no demands that Iran drop the fatwa against Salman Rushdie. They are, as the International Rushdie Defence Committee declared, not even a slap on the wrist; they send a message that Iran can get away with murder in Europe.

The Government argues that returning the ambassadors to Iran does not necessarily imply a softening of the EU position. Envoy, it is said, can convey a sharper message, with greater authority, than their deputies. It is in Europe's interest that Iran should be left in no doubt about European anger at its underground war against exiles and support of terrorists. It is also important that all Europe's ambassadors act together, especially in the run-up to Iranian elections when voters should know how Europe views their Government. Greece, ever ready to take advantage when a question of principle is at stake, did not even withdraw its ambassador, while Britain did so years ago in protest at the fatwa and Iran's mistreatment of a British diplomat. The worst sign of European disunity would be for the envoys

to go back in dribs and drabs, with Iran wooing each country in turn and being rewarded with an ambassador's return. Britain also argues that the EU measures go further than several countries wanted. France was known to be unhappy with the blanket ban on ministerial visits, and wanted to make "technical" exceptions to allow senior trade officials to visit Iran. The French attempt to take advantage of the Iranian market is all too obvious, and several other countries opposed the tough line proposed by Britain and Germany. If a common EU foreign policy is to have any meaning, it must indeed be commonly agreed and observed. The new sanctions may be little more than inconvenient to Iran; but if fully imposed by all 15, they do, nevertheless, send a message.

As so often, however, principle appears to have given way to national advantage. No European country supports trade sanctions against Iran because none trusts its neighbour to observe them. And with much of Europe still suffering unemployment and recession, it is all too clear that such fears are justified. This has bedevilled all attempts by the United States to formulate a co-ordinated Western response to Tehran's rogue regime. Yesterday's sanctions say nothing of Iranian compensation to the families killed, do little to clamp down on Iranians travelling abroad to stir up trouble, and have no real teeth to deter terrorism. Despite the Berlin judgment, Washington has far to go to convince Europe that Iran is still a threat to Western democracy.

CANADA HIGH

One Prime Minister facing a brighter future

The snap election that the Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien, has called in Canada on June 2, 17 months before it is due, is likely to see the ruling Liberals swept back to power with his own authority enhanced. After years in the doldrums, the economy is booming, foreign investment is healthy and a generous budget has boosted the feel-good factor. The Opposition is weak and divided. Canada's international prestige, enhanced by its readiness to lead a multinational force to Zaire, is high. Most importantly, some of the fratricidal bitterness over Quebec separation has begun to ebb as the province focuses on reviving its economy.

Mr Chrétien is, nevertheless, unlikely to achieve the landslide he won at the 1993 general election when the ruling Conservatives lost all but two of their seats, including that of Kim Campbell, the Prime Minister. The Tories' devastation was so complete that the party was forced to rebuild its policies, structures and morale. Bolstered by a strong performance in some provinces, especially Ontario, and under new leadership, they are now running at about 18 per cent in the polls. The two main opposition parties now represented in Parliament, the Bloc Québécois and Reform Party, are both regional, strong in the West and in Quebec respectively but representing sectional interests and unlikely to extend their vote.

The Liberals cannot afford complacency. Six months ago their popularity rating was 67 per cent; now it is around 48 per cent. The main reason is that unemployment remains stubbornly high at 9 per cent and few can

say that they are better off now than in 1993. Canadians are demanding: polls show that they trust their Government more than any other developed country, and appear naively bruised if it does not deliver what it promised. Since coming to power Mr Chrétien has backtracked on several campaign pledges and stolen many of the Tories' clothes — a tactic familiar in Europe but one that Canadians still regard as dishonourable.

Canada also has difficulty in recognising its own achievements. The twin burdens of constant comparison with the American giant next door and the need to readjust formerly unequal relations between anglophones and francophones have overshadowed any pride in the country's Scandinavian-style society. The continuing uncertainty over Quebec has inhibited all Ottawa's attempts to foster a sense of nationhood and has paralysed much of the Federal Government's normal business.

On this divisive issue, however, Mr Chrétien can claim success. Shaken by the near victory of the independence referendum, the Federal Government has stepped up the pace of devolution and embarked on an energetic campaign to persuade Quebec that as a "distinct society" it has more to gain within Canada than outside. This will not satisfy many francophones, and the abrasive West would happily cast the province adrift. But for the first time in a generation, the election will not be about Canada's Constitution or its possible break-up. That is, in itself, a measure of Mr Chrétien's achievement.

Labour funding for cancer care

From Professor D. J. Kerr

Sir, Dr Sandy Macara, Chairman of the British Medical Association, is surely wrong to deride Labour's pledge to spend £100 million in reducing NHS waiting lists (report, April 18). If this involvement was scattered across the NHS I would agree that it would be lost without trace; but Labour plans to focus on cancer services.

A poll recently undertaken by Birmingham Health Authority of residents in its area, one of the largest in the UK, demonstrated that cancer, still a stigmatising illness, is the number-one health priority for every age group of those polled. It is also well recognised that there are large variations in cancer survival, depending upon where you live, and consequently in the delivery of cancer services.

An NHS fragmented into a series of warring city-states, so-called trusts, militates against the possibility of promoting the sort of seamless, quality care to take us out of the lower divisions of Europe's cancer survival league.

Labour will promote a hub-and-spoke model, linking cancer centres and units in district general hospitals, ensuring inter-trust collaboration and improving the homogeneity of cancer care by multidisciplinary teams of health professionals. The party has made a commitment of new, earmarked funds which will be devoted to the regions to help pump-prime this pro-

Ten million pounds, to be added to an existing allocation of £30 million, spent on the diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer, will not immediately solve the problem. However, those of us charged regionally and nationally with the task of implementing improved delivery of cancer care welcome this focused and strategic investment in the nation's health.

The hub-and-spoke model could be a paradigm for improving other aspects of healthcare and an important step towards re-nationalising the NHS.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID KERR
(Clinical Director),
CRC Institute for Cancer Studies,
University of Birmingham,
Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT.
April 22

Election 97

From Lord Rix, Chairman of Mencap

Sir, Matthew Parris, writing on sectors of society which have not been considered throughout the election campaign ("People in search of a party", April 25) singles out "the poor and the public sector". I would add

At least 1.2 million people have learning disabilities and a further 4.8 million have disabilities of other kinds. With so many marginal seats it is worth reminding the politicians that these seats could be won by the thousands of votes of disabled people and their families.

The Disability Discrimination Act, introduced last December, was intended as a move towards civil rights, as the Community Care Act was towards good community care. Instead there seems to be a steady erosion in rights for people with disabilities, with legislation which had seemed positive being negatively interpreted.

Candidates who offer to make the hope of wholehearted community care a reality could be amazed at their support on Thursday.

Yours etc.
BRIAN RIX,
Chairman, Mencap,
Mencap National Centre,
123 Golden Lane, EC1.
April 25

From Mr Neil Moore

Sir, You published a letter from a group of former Tories who have defected to the Liberal Democrats (April 28). I write as a lifelong Liberal who is moving the other way and expects to vote Conservative for the first time ever on May 1.

I shall be voting for John Major, not for the fractious, squabbling party that has let her down. He has presided over the healthiest UK economy that I can remember. He is pragmatically but not neurotically Eurosceptic. Perhaps, above all, he stands for a principle — the individual's freedom of choice — which too many Liberal Democrats seem to have forgotten, not least in education.

I believe that Mr Major has fought an honest campaign and offers the best chance of preserving traditional liberal values.

Yours etc.
NEIL MOORE,
26 Lower Castle Road,
St Mawes, Cornwall.
April 29

From Mr Denis Christian

Sir, When two of the three major players in an election are purveying a similar product, is it not rather silly to describe the third option as a "wasted vote"?

Yours faithfully,
DENIS CHRISTIAN,
2 Chichester Place,
Kemp Town,
Brighton, East Sussex.
April 28

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Tactical voting for Eurosceptics

From the Chairman of the European Movement — United Kingdom

Sir, You urge readers, in effect, to vote against supporters of the European Movement in the general election ("The good Eurosceptic's guide to making the most of a tactical vote", April 28, later editions: leading article, April 29). May I respond by saying that the backing courageously given to the European Movement by colleagues in all parties is motivated by a desire to see a strong Britain leading a strong Europe. Contrary to fears stirred up by Eurosceptics, Britain's independence is not at stake. However, our prosperity and influence would be at risk should we become semi-detached from Europe.

This threat has come about because people have waffled in anti-EU rhetoric instead of looking at the reality of what EU membership means: access to the world's largest single market, 3.5 million jobs linked to exports to the EU, inward investment which companies like Toyota and Siemens clearly indicated to be in jeopardy if Britain turns its back on Europe.

In the early 1980s, I stayed in the Labour Party, opposed extremism and fought for a sensible policy on Europe until common sense prevailed. In the same spirit, I shall remain a Times reader.

Yours sincerely,
GILES RADICE,
Chairman, European Movement — United Kingdom,
Dean Bradley House,
52 Horseferry Road, SW1.
April 29

From Mr Michael Hutchings

Sir, Unlike the jingoistic minority who want nothing of Europe in any form, vast numbers of us desperately want the UK to get back to playing its full part in the EU as soon as possible. We have already lost ground at the negotiating table because the Government has been distracted by party squabbling. Most of the people I meet in the rest of Europe do not revel in our disarray; they still want our full involvement.

The EU needs to be strong and unified in order to ensure that we continue to live in the relatively peaceful and prosperous society that we have enjoyed during the 24 years of our membership. That seems to me a more concrete definition of sovereignty than the colour of my passport.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL HUTCHINGS
(Consultant on EU law),
76 Manville Road, SW17.
April 29

The Norway fallacy

From Dr Neville March Hunning

Sir, The example of Norway is continually paraded before us (for example, letter, April 23) as a *modus vivendi* which would allow us to have our European cake and eat it. It is false.

Norway is not outside the Common Market; it is an integral part of it. It is subject to all the rules in the EC Treaty and its directives and regulations on the manufacture and trade in goods and services, on the immigration of workers and the self-employed, on transport, employment, consumer protection, the environment, etc (except, notably, agriculture and fisheries). Its companies must obey the EC competition rules, which are actively enforced. Its courts are bound by community law as interpreted by the European Court in Luxembourg, either directly or through the preliminary rulings of the Eca court, also in Luxembourg.

Candidates who offer to make the hope of wholehearted community care a reality could be amazed at their support on Thursday.

If the UK left the EU it might indeed be able to join Norway in the European Economic Area (EEA). But in such a case it would, like Norway, still be bound by most of the rules and constraints (and reciprocal benefits) to which the Eurosceptics object. In return, we would be excluded from the

EU's political negotiating processes, play no part in the drafting and adoption of new EU laws (which would nevertheless become binding on us, as they are on Norway) and, perhaps more importantly, be expelled from our inside seat (on the K-4 Committee) in the European fight against organised crime, etc.

The Norwegian EEA path is not an attractive one for Britain. The Swiss path may be more attractive but is not available. Throughout the EU the most virulent political swearword is and always has been "free trade area", usually preceded by the word "mere". It is inconceivable that anyone in the EU would ever accept any UK free trade access outside the EEA, i.e. without the UK being legally bound by the EU's decision-making.

If we wish to extricate ourselves from the law of the European Union, the only way is by complete withdrawal. We could then try to use our diplomatic muscle (if any); but we would be in the same position as Brazil or India or Australia or Canada. There is no middle way.

Yours faithfully,
NEVILLE MARCH HUNNINGS
(Editor, *Common Market Law Reports*, 11 Russell Hill, Purley, Surrey).

Finish your veg

From Mrs Kathleen Boothman

Sir, I discussed your report (April 22) on chocolate-flavoured carrots with my 10-year-old daughter.

She agreed that children were put off cooked vegetables by their texture rather than their taste: "At school it's the sogginess of the cabbage, the squishiness of the broccoli, the floppiness of the carrots that people hate." She added that when raw carrots sticks were served they were always eaten in a flash.

Doesn't this suggest an alternative approach to the problem of vegetable-rejecting children? Quite a number of vegetables can be eaten raw. These are generally better for the teeth and digestion and — provided they are fresh — retain more of their vitamin content.

Yours faithfully,
K. BOOTHMAN,
35 The Park,
Cheltenham, Gloucestershire.

From Professor J. M. Thoday

Sir, Why don't they sell carrot-flavoured carrots?

Yours sincerely,
J. M. THODAY,
7 Clarkson Road, Cambridge.
April 22

GBS's classics

From Mr John Coleby

Sir, Sir Peter Hall (letter, April 21) and Barbara Smoker (April 24) criticise the actions of the Society of Authors as literary agent for the Shaw estate. The society is duty bound to follow the instructions of the trustees of the estate and its main beneficiaries; it can advise on but not decide matters it then has to negotiate.

It is easy but unfair to blame the agent for the decisions of a principal. In 1992, writing in the society's journal, *The Author*, Shaw himself stated that it was safer to leave off one's breastplate when battling for authors' rights.

After all it is possible for the impresario, Duncan Weldon, to sublimate rights which he holds in a particular play, and which if all parties agree could be a nice little earner for him into the bargain.

The National Theatre in Sir Peter's day still owned the English stage rights in *Gays and Dols*, as Lord Olivier had long had a yen to appear as Nathan Detroit. It was left to Sir Richard Eyre to rescue that classic in 1982 for the benefit of us all.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN COLEBY
(Clerk, Society of Authors, 1970-76;
Rights Manager, National Theatre,
1976-80),
The Cedars,
Cronfield, Farnham, Surrey.
April 24

Letters for publication may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.

No consensus on drink law reform

From Honorary Alderman
SIMON COCKSEIDGE

Sir, The Chairman of the Campaign for Real Ale (Camra) and others state that "the time has come for a new liquor licensing Act" (letter, April 23) but they should ask our politicians to justify why there should be any licensing legislation at all.

What role does the State play in telling us where we may buy or drink alcohol? Surely the market and



COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE April 29: Mr David Dain was received in audience by The Queen upon his appointment as British High Commissioner to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Mr Dain was also received by Her Majesty.

His Excellency Mr Ma Zhenghai was received in audience by The Queen and presented the Letters of Recall of his predecessor and his own Letters of Credence as Ambassador from the People's Republic of China to the Court of St James's.

Sir John Coles (Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs) was present.

The Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia, and Mrs Gordon were received by Her Majesty.

Mr Justice Neuberger was received by The Queen upon his appointment as a Justice of the High Court when Her Majesty conferred upon him the honour of Knighthood and invested him with the insignia of a Knight Bachelor.

The Lady Susan Hussey has succeeded Lady Dugdale as Lady in Waiting to The Queen.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE April 29: The Princess Royal, President, the British Academy of Film and Television Arts, this evening attended the Fifth Anniversary Awards at the Royal Albert Hall, London SW7.

CLARENCE HOUSE April 29: The Lady Margaret

Colville has succeeded Lady Penn as Lady in Waiting to Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother.

ST JAMES'S PALACE April 29: The Prince of Wales, Duke of Cornwall, this morning presided at a meeting of The Prince's Council at 10 Buckingham Gate, London SW1.

His Royal Highness this afternoon attended a Reception at St James's Palace for the Prayer Book Society's Twenty Fifth Anniversary.

The Prince of Wales, President, The Prince's Trust, this evening attended Christ Church Superstars at the Lyceum Theatre, London WC1.

YORK HOUSE April 29: The Duke of Kent, Vice-Chairman, the British Overseas Trade Board, this morning arrived at London Heathrow airport from Johannesburg, South Africa.

Mr Nicolas Adamson was in attendance.

The Duchess of Kent, Patron UK Committee for UNICEF, this morning visited the Hlatololanang Project, Hlatololanang, Northern Province, South Africa.

THATCHED HOUSE LODGE RICHMOND PARK April 29: Princess Alexandra, accompanied by the Rt Hon Sir Angus Ogilvy, left Heathrow Airport, London, this afternoon to undertake engagements in Maryland, United States of America. Captain Neil Blair, RN, is in attendance.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE April 29: The Princess Royal, President, the British Academy of Film and Television Arts, this evening attended the Fifth Anniversary Awards at the Royal Albert Hall, London SW7.

CLARENCE HOUSE April 29: The Lady Margaret

Birthdays today

The King of Sweden celebrates his 51st birthday today.

Sir James Adams, diplomat, 65; Dr Peter Ahrendts, architect, 64; Dr G.E. Aylmer, former Master, St Peter's College, Oxford, 71; Mrs Janet Buchan, former MEP, 71; Mrs Barbara Calvert, QC, 71; Judge Sir Robin David, QC, 75; Mr Dickie Davies, sports commentator, 64; Lord Diamond, 60; Dame Isabel Graham-Bryer, former chairman, Oxford Regional Hospital Board, 95; Mr Leslie Grantham, actor, 51; Mr G.M. Guthrie, former chief executive, Mecca Leisure, 50; Mr R.J.D. Hazel, director, Constitution Unit, 49; Mr Alfred Lomas, MEP, 69; Mr Keith Povey, Chief Constable, Leicestershire, 51; Lord Sanderson of Bowden, 64; Professor Graham Upton, Vice-Chancellor designate, Oxford Brookes University, 53.

Dinners

Navy Board Admiral Sir Jock Slater, First Sea Lord, presided at a Navy Board dinner held last night at Admiralty House to mark the retirement of Admiral Sir Hugo White, Vice-Admiral Sir Toby Fere and Rear-Admiral Fred Scours and the retirement from the board of Rear-Admiral Jeremy Blackham.

Engineers' Company Dr James Smith, Master of the Engineers' Company, was the host at a dinner held last night at the Mansion House. Among those present were

Alderman Sir Brian and Lady James and Lady Glover, the Lord Mayor of London, the President of the Chartered Insurance Institute, the President of the Institute of Insurance, the Chairman of the British Insurance Brokers' Association and the Masters of the Cooper's, Accurates' and Surveyors' Companies.

were presented by the Master, Among those present were

Admiral Sir Roger Bell, the Master of Signals, and Masters of the Drapers', Merchant Taylors', Pewterers', Goldsmiths', Painter-Potmakers', Scientific Instrument Makers', Lightmelters' Companies and Water Conservators' Companies.

Insurers' Company

Mr Peter Harris, Master of the Insurers' Company, was the host at a dinner held last night at the Mansion House. Among those present were

Alderman Sir Brian and Lady James and Lady Glover, the Lord Mayor of London, the President of the Chartered Insurance Institute, the President of the Institute of Insurance, the Chairman of the British Insurance Brokers' Association and the Masters of the Cooper's, Accurates' and Surveyors' Companies.

Danes Hill School, Oxtshott

Danes Hill School, Oxtshott, Surrey, will be delighted to hear from former pupils who would be interested in receiving further information about the Danes Hill Golden Jubilee celebrations this summer. Please contact the Headmaster's Secretary on 01372 842346.

Luncheon

Institute of Energy Sir Bob Reid, Chairman of London Electricity, was the principal guest and speaker at the annual luncheon and 70th anniversary of the formation of the Institute of Energy held yesterday at the Langham Hotel. Mr P.H. Johnson, president, was in the chair.

Several competitions are being held with this show, which opened

BIRTHS

WALL - On 1st April 1997, to Catherine (née Bremont) and William, a son, Charles Alexander. William is the brother for Charles and Isabella, the Duke and Duchess of York.

WHITE WHEATLEY - On April 7th 1997, to Barbara and Andrew, a son, Max. Barbara is the widow of George Grove, Wimbleton Village.

WICKENS - On April 2nd, to William and Catherine, a son.

WILSON - On April 20th, to Simon (née Wilson) and John, a son, William Edward.

WILLIAMS - On April 21st, to Sally-Ann (née Maitz) and Adam, a son, Giles Orlando Maitz, a brother for Elena.

WILSON - On April 21st, to Linda and Mark, a son, Frederick Michael, a brother for Patrick and Eleanor.

WILSON - On April 21st, to Diane and Michael, a son, Alexander Michael.

WILSON - On April 24th, to Douglas (née Wilson) and Michael, a daughter, Alison.

WILSON - On April 21st, to Queen Charlotte's Hospital, to Simon (née Wilson) and Linda, a son, William Edward.

WILSON - On April 22nd, to Sally-Ann (née Maitz) and Adam, a son, Giles Orlando Maitz, a brother for Elena.

WILSON - On April 22nd, to Linda and Michael, a son, Alexander Michael.

WILSON - On April 22nd, to The Portland Hospital, to Linda and Sally, a son, Christopher, a brother for Alexander.

WILSON - On April 22nd, to The Portland Hospital, to Linda and Sally, a son, Christopher, a brother for Alexander.

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OBITUARIES

LORD TAYLOR OF GOSFORTH

Lord Taylor of Gosforth, Lord Chief Justice of England, 1992-96, died from cancer on April 28 aged 66. He was born on May 1, 1930.

Although ill-health forced him to retire early, in his four short years as Lord Chief Justice, Lord Taylor of Gosforth redefined the role of England's most senior full-time judge and changed fundamentally the public's perception of the judiciary. Taking on responsibility for the criminal justice system at a time of crisis, he did much to help to restore public confidence. Yet he will probably be remembered as much for his battles with Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, over criminal justice policy as he will for his contributions to the criminal law.

Until Lord Taylor's appointment in 1992, senior judges took the view that they had to make the best of whatever legislation Parliament served up, however half-baked it might turn out to be. But the new Lord Chief Justice believed he should try to get the recipe changed while there was still time. If a quiet word with the chef did not do the trick, he was never shy of letting everyone in the restaurant know what he thought of the fare on offer.

Peter Murray Taylor was born in Newcastle upon Tyne and educated there at the Royal Grammar School. His father was a doctor; his grandfather worked as a tailor. That, at least according to family legend, was why the immigration officer put his grandfather's name down as Taylor when he came off the boat from Vilna: the family name had originally been Telzer.

The youthful Peter Taylor first got to know his wife Irene during the war, when they were both evacuated as children to Cumbria. They were married in 1950, and had three daughters and a son. The couple were a year short of their fortieth wedding anniversary when Irene Taylor died in 1995, also of cancer. It was a loss which affected him deeply.

Taylor was the second Jew to become Lord Chief Justice of England: the first was Rufus Isaacs, later Marquess of Reading. While making no claims to be religiously observant, Taylor became more sympathetic to the needs of minorities in society. He knew what it was like to be on the receiving end of prejudice. During a keynote speech on racial discrimination in the legal profession, he related a personal incident from his days as a QC on the North Eastern Circuit. He had been involved, he said, with an Indian client who requested an Indian barrister. That barrister, realising he would be partnering Peter Taylor, said he was not prepared to work with a Jew.

Taylor had also seen poverty at close quarters: as a wartime evacuee he lived in a house with no bathroom and no electricity. In 1992, when he became Lord Chief Justice, he said he thought he had

been appointed because he was not considered to be wholly out of touch — he had been in the mainstream of the life of the nation.

Taylor made that remark at a news conference called to mark his appointment, the first time a judge had agreed to face the media in this way. He initially promised to hold news conferences every six months but soon thought better of it: despite his popular image, he never really understood the media and had little patience with journalists. He, no doubt, felt his worst feelings about the press were vindicated by the decision of a national newspaper in May 1996 to run a story about his impending retirement a few hours before Downing Street had intended to reveal that he was suffering from cancer (the announcement was brought forward as a result). But Taylor nevertheless did not hesitate to use press publicity when he wanted to make an impact. His devastating last speech in the House of Lords, delivered in May 1996, was effectively "trialled" in an article he published that morning in *The Times*.

After reading history at Pembroke College, Cambridge, Taylor was called to the Bar in 1954. Basing himself in Newcastle, he became a formidable advocate: he took silk when he was only 36. By 1980 he had risen to the top of his profession, becoming an outstanding leader of the North Eastern Circuit and then chairman of the Bar Council. In 1974 he had prosecuted the corrupt property developer John Poulsen, who was sent to prison for seven years. Colleagues remember his choice turn of phrase. Some, he memorably quipped in that trial, are born with greatcoats; some acquire them; and others have greatcoats thrust upon them.

But in another famous trial of that era he did not fare so well. In 1979 Taylor prosecuted the former leader of the Liberal Party, Jeremy Thorpe, on charges of conspiracy to murder and incitement to murder. Thorpe, defended by George Carman, was acquitted on both counts.

Taylor was involved in two other cases which he was later to regret, although there was no suggestion that he was responsible for what turned out to be grave miscarriages of justice. In 1976 Taylor prosecuted Stefan Kiszkó for the brutal murder of an 11-year-old girl. The jury found him guilty and it was not until 1992 that evidence emerged which proved Kiszkó could not have been the killer. That evidence was not disclosed to defence lawyers at the time of Kiszkó's original trial, although nobody suggested that Taylor himself was ever told about it. Kiszkó died within two years of being cleared by the Court of Appeal.

He was also one of the junior Crown counsel in the case of Judith Ward, convicted of murdering the 12 people who died in 1974 when the IRA left a bomb in a coach travelling on the M62 motorway. Ward was cleared by the Court of Appeal.

He was also one of the junior Crown



in 1992 after the court found that three senior forensic scientists had withheld crucial evidence. Some of the lawyers responsible for the original prosecution were criticised by the appeal judges for not advising the scientists of their duty to disclose this evidence to the defence.

Taylor, who was by then Lord Chief Justice, had offered to give evidence at Judith Ward's appeal, but he was told he would not be needed — the declining of his offer rankled with him and he later publicly spoke of it.

Taylor was made a High Court judge in 1980 and promoted to the Court of Appeal in 1988. A year later he was appointed to chair the Inquiry into the Hillsborough football stadium disaster. He was a good choice: he had captained Northumberland at rugby and was a keen supporter of Newcastle's rugby and football teams. His handling of the inquiry was sensitive and efficient and the report, which followed, vivid and well-received. It placed the blame on the police and the owners of the ground, not on the fans. Its principal recommendation was the introduction of all-seat stadiums, thus leading

the Government to abandon its initial inclination towards a football identity card system.

The humanity which earned him praise for the Hillsborough report was evident in other aspects of his life. Taylor was a man of broad talents. As well as playing rugby, he was a classical pianist of near-professional accomplishment. He said he performed only at charity concerts "so that if something goes wrong, nobody can demand their money back". He had links for many years with the Leeds International Piano Competition and performed with its chairman, Dame Fanny Waterman, in public — as well as playing with Tatjana Nikolyeva, the great Russian pianist, in private at the Judges' Lodgings in Leeds. In the lunch recess during the Poulson trial, he was known to relax by slipping off to play the piano. He also enjoyed playing in his own string trio at Christmas parties and at the Garrick Club.

Taylor believed that judicial wigs created the wrong image, and he tried unsuccessfully to have them abolished. Moreover, in a speech shortly before his retirement, he said judges should no longer remain silent in the face of media criticism. On "suitable occasions," he said, "judges should be prepared to speak on matters affecting the law and the courts, to answer criticism and to explain policies". Not many of them took him at his word.

Taylor had a remarkable influence on government policy. He had regular meetings with the Home Secretary and also spoke to the Prime Minister from time to time. Michael Howard would probably not have gone ahead with his plan to allow juries to draw inferences from a defendant's silence — in the face of a recommendation from the Royal Commission on Criminal Justice. "If Taylor had not supported him, on the other hand, Howard had little option but to reject the commission's proposals for restricting trial by jury once Taylor had come out against them.

The full scale of Taylor's influence could even turn out to be retrospective. In a speech he made to Scottish solicitors at Gleneagles in the spring of 1993, he attacked two provisions of the Criminal Justice Act, 1991, which, he declared, "defy common sense". The provisions restricted the power of judges to imprison offenders. Within six months Parliament had abolished these restrictions, together with the discredited system of unit fines.

But by 1995, with a change of Home Secretary, criminal justice policy had gone into reverse. This time, as he fully

accepted, there was a crisis of confidence in the criminal justice system. The Birmingham Six had been freed on appeal a year earlier; before them, the Maguire family had been cleared; earlier still, it had been the turn of the Guildford Four. Taylor said he hoped these miscarriages of justice would change judicial attitudes. "I think judges will be a great deal more cautious in the way in which they direct juries on the facts," he said, "and I hope the police will be a great deal more cautious in how they go about their investigations."

An official acknowledgement that things had gone wrong was the first step to restoring public confidence in the system. When he retired in 1996, miscarriages of justice were not the concern they had been four years earlier, and Taylor is entitled to much of the credit.

He also did much to modernise the public's impression of the judiciary. Taylor said he wanted to overcome "the widely held belief that judges are out of touch or even, as has been said, 'live on another planet'". He gave the occasional newspaper interview and became the first judge to appear on the BBC's *Question Time*. It was not an experience he chose to repeat.

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Certainly, it was not an unexpected view from someone who aimed to make the judiciary more "user friendly", to give it a human face. More than that, it reflected a burning sense of his own role at the apex of the judiciary. In all he did, whether tackling the wrongs which had given rise to miscarriages of justice, or battling on the political front for the judges' independence and freedom to fit a sentence to the crime, he was both fearless and passionate.

He is survived by his three daughters and son.

There was a sombre and moving occasion. All those present were well aware that this was the last time they would see Taylor speak there as Lord Chief Justice. He was a warm and clubbable man, a popular member of the Garrick, and was held in great affection. Even as he and Michael Howard were attacking one another in public, both of them insisted that there was no personal animosity involved.

A few weeks earlier, Taylor had delivered his last judgment in court. Rosemary West, convicted of murdering ten young women whose remains were found at houses she had occupied, was refused leave to appeal. The Lord Chief Justice and the two judges sitting with him dealt briskly with the legal arguments put to them: their ruling did little to advance the law on such topics as "similar fact evidence" or the rules for "severing" an indictment. But the crucial sentence was to be found in their last paragraph. "The concept of all these murders and burials taking place at the applicant's home and concurrently grave sexual abuse of other young girls being committed by both husband and wife together without the latter being party to the killings is," declared the judges, "clearly one the jury were entitled to reject." In other words, Taylor was saying, Rosemary West must have been involved: it stood to reason. This was typical of his plain man's, commonsense approach to the law.

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He is survived by his three daughters and son.

SIR HENRY PEAT

Sir Henry Peat, KCVO, DFC, chartered accountant and former Auditor to the Queen's Privy Purse, died on April 4 aged 83. He was born on April 14, 1913.

HENRY PEAT came from a family of well-known chartered accountants and did not seek to escape the profession that ran in his blood. Educated at Eton and Trinity College, Oxford, he joined the family firm of Peat Marwick (then Peat Marwick Mitchell) as an articled clerk in the late 1930s, qualifying in 1940.

To an adventurous and

high-spirited young man the prospect of spending the war in a reserved occupation had no appeal and, though his calling was protected under the National Service Act, he volunteered to join the Royal Air Force as early as 1939. He was accepted but, much to his chagrin, found himself once again desk bound, controlling uniforms and equipment. He applied many times for more active service but was always turned down. Eventually he discovered that, given the casualties among rear-gunner aircraft failed to take off properly, ploughed through some nearby trees and broke up. The rear cockpit broke away

cap of being more than 6ft tall, had to apply and was accepted for training.

He joined Bomber Command and soon became a popular member of his mess, being a competent pianist and generous enough companion to lend his car to his friends when he was away flying. He flew some forty missions as "tail-end Charlie", mainly in Lancasters, and had his share of lucky escapes — the most notable being the occasion when his heavily-laden aircraft failed to take off properly, ploughed through some nearby trees and broke up.

The rear cockpit broke away

from the main structure and remained relatively intact, allowing Peat to scramble clear and to help pull his comrades from the wreckage. Unfortunately, not all of them survived. In recognition of his many bombing missions with the RAF he was awarded the DFC.

After the war Peat returned to the family accountancy firm, eventually becoming a partner. He followed both his father and grandfather in being made Auditor to the Queen's Privy Purse and, having been appointed CVO in 1973, was advanced to KCVO in 1980.

During the 1960s he had joined the management committee of the Chartered Accountants Benevolent Association and eventually became their president — a position he held until his death. He was a very active participant in the affairs of the association, seeing it grow to having more than 500 beneficiaries. During the 1980s, together with the then secretary, he visited more than a quarter of the families on the association's books.

He retired in 1983 from Peat Marwick and went to live full-time in the Wiltshire countryside. Unfortunately, during the past year his health deteriorated to such an extent that he had to be moved into a local nursing home.

He married in 1932 but the

marriage was later dissolved. He is survived by two sons and a daughter.

EULALIE SPICER

Eulalie Spicer, OBE, solicitor, died on March 29 aged 90. She was born on April 20, 1906.

EULALIE SPICER, one of the founders of the Legal Aid Scheme, secured her position in the legal establishment during the Second World War, running the Services Divorce Department.

By the end of 1942 the War Office had become seriously concerned about the morale of non-commissioned servicemen and women whose marriages were shaky. The volume of matrimonial litigation was rising fast but, with many solicitors and barristers serving in the Armed Forces, the existing scheme was severely strained. In response to these developments, the Law Society set up the Services Divorce Department. Spicer was appointed supervising solicitor.

Only four years qualified, she had recently joined the Law Society, from a small firm of solicitors, to undertake war work. In the process, she became one of the country's earliest salaried solicitors.

Under considerable pressure to prove herself, Spicer worked hard and developed a tough, somewhat masculine exterior. Not even close colleagues addressed her by her Christian name. She wore her hair in an Eton crop, never used make-up and occasionally dressed in a suit and tie. At various stages in life she played saxophone in her older

brother's dance band, and was reckoned a handy shot with a rifle. Until she was 80, she smoked cigarettes through a long amber holder.

But even for unconventional women it was not easy at that period to draw from clients the necessary level of detail relating to adultery ("no fault" divorce had not then been invented). For an unmarried woman, dealing with more worldly clients, it could be especially difficult. She sometimes found the work distasteful, but earnestly believed in facilitating divorce, particularly if children were involved.

Spicer jointly edited the 15th edition of the standard work *Laty on Divorce*, and was solely responsible for editing the 4th edition of *Phillips Practice of the Divorce Division*.

Even before the war ended, the Government started planning for legal services to be incorporated in the welfare state. Spicer worked with senior figures such as Sir Thomas and Dick Thesiger of the Lord Chancellor's Department on devising a structure for what later became the Legal Aid Scheme.

The scheme was formally introduced in October 1950, and Spicer was appointed to the No 1 London area committee, handling appeals from lower committees. Out of the 12 areas across England and Wales, No 1 London was the most successful. The workload was formi-

dable: after Spicer left it was considered large enough to split into two.

Law Society rules obliged her to retire in 1966 — she had been appointed OBE in 1961 — but she continued to work for seven years in private practice. She advised insurers, including a Lloyd's syndicate.

Eulalie Evan Spicer was born in Kent. Her upbringing was comfortable, thanks to the family's success in the writing-paper business. She attended St Helen's School in Northwood, Middlesex, then studied philosophy at King's College London, and at University College (her PhD was on Aristotle's conception of the soul).

Her family was devout one uncle was Dean of Manchester. Spicer herself became secretary of the Legal Aid Committee of the Church of England's General Synod, and advised on changes to divorce law during the 1960s.

In retirement, her academic and religious interests flourished. She served for many years as a governor of her old school, and took a BD in theology at King's College. In October 1976, she was admitted and licensed by the Bishop of London as a lay reader.

Until she died, Eulalie Spicer continued to play an active part in churches around the home in Dolphin Square, Pimlico, which she had shared with her mother in the early 1950s.

She was unmarried and is survived by two nephews.

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Promises, promises – made to be broken

Tony Blair has said it again. Labour has no plans to privatise Channel 4. But do the mild words spoken to Sir David Frost on BBC1 on Sunday morning constitute a promise? Not many people believe that Labour, if tomorrow goes its way, will resist for long the temptation to sell off Channel 4 to cover more pressing commitments. Will Labour honour the equally delphic promise it has given British Telecom that it is "minded" to relax the restrictions that, for now, keep BT out of the entertainment business? This issue has made no headlines. But we all have telephones. Freeing BT to sell movies by phone line could affect us all.

Judging when a promise has been broken is as hard as deciding when one has been made. I was astounded by the Independent Television Commission's rebuke to the ITV companies last week for "showing too much drama". Surely the ITC knows that what we see on ITV nationally is decided not by the companies but by the powerful ITV Network Centre. Rapping the companies for the network's decisions is like penalising the players for the coach's mistake.

But is the ITV network schedule such a mistake? It's not as if the channel were filled with game shows. The dramas, even the soaps, have been good. ITV's ruling council employs the Network Centre and its supremo, Marcus Plantin, to design a schedule that will meet the contradictory obligations laid on ITV. To attract mass audiences, to earn a lot of money (so the companies can meet their payments to the Treasury) and to fulfil public service requirements, not the least of which is to spoil every evening's entertainment by plonking *News At Ten* in the middle. To ask that the companies offer sober documentaries and risky new comedies to a centre mandated to please the audience is an exercise in futility.

The ITC has explained that it directed its criticism at the ITV companies because its powers to review performance extend only to them. These won their licences in part because of their programme promises. All the regulators can do, therefore, is to point out when a promise is not kept. Fair enough – except didn't the ITC also approve the national networking arrangements? If the web connecting the 15 regional companies to Network Centre is now labyrinthine, the ITC must demand clearer lines of responsibility for what gets on the screen.

Being a regulator is not easy. The ITC has to make tough judgments that are then open to judicial review. So far, when challenged in court by disappointed losers, it has won every time. But a big one is coming up. In the next few weeks the commission has the unenviable duty of choosing between two applicants for a commercial digital terrestrial



BRENDA MADDUX

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The ITC will, however, have to weigh up the BDB charge: that its rival's offerings are too futuristic and variegated, either to pay their way or to tempt today's customers into making the investment in the required new set-top equipment to get digital *going fast*. The ITC could dodge a difficult choice by splitting the available package of frequencies. That will satisfy nobody.

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Sears board should have acted sooner Certainty not party is driving force Aiming for a better society

LORD TEBBIT was a fearsome Cabinet minister, well able to disguise his finer feelings when faced with tough decisions. He is so proud of his famous exhortation to the unemployed that they should board their bicycles and head off in search of work, that he pens a regular column for *The Sun* under the heading "On Your Bike".

But as a long-standing director of Sears, his lordship clearly took a more sympathetic view when faced with deciding the fate of Liam Strong. The disaster-prone chief executive is at last being sent on his way, but with up to £500,000 in his saddle bags.

Institutional investors who have been crying out for management change at Sears were yesterday too relieved by Strong's departure to cajol over the cost. However, the raft of private shareholders who have seen their investment deteriorate over the past five years may feel less sanguine about the handout.

There is no doubt the scale of the task that faced the former British Airways marketing director when he walked blithely into the group's Oxford Street head office. His public statements at the time indicate either that Strong completely underestimated the difficulties or showed an honourable, but foolhardy, sensitivity to the *ancien régime*.

What became increasingly ob-

vious as he littered successive annual reports with platitudes and promises, was that even if he had realised the inherent problems in Sears, he was not capable of righting them. British Shoe Corporation was the running sore at Sears when Strong arrived, and, while the scale of the business has been cut back, its losses are growing.

Strong's ill-judged deal to offload some of the shops on to Stephen Hinchliffe, the persuasive entrepreneur who is now the subject of an SFO inquiry, was a measure of his desperation. But the board should have realised he was out of his depth before that. It was increasingly clear that he could not build the team that an enterprise of Sears's size needed: the roll call of departures would have worried the most gung-ho hire and fire merchants.

Yet, while the City grew increasingly perturbed by his performance, the Sears board made him a protected species.

The Sears boardroom had its heavyweights. Apart from Lord Tebbit, whose credentials as a retail expert remain something of a mystery, the doughty Sir

Alick Rankin, currently chairman of Bank of Scotland, has been a director since the pre-Strong days. David McDonald, chairman of Pitfalls, has been there since 1981. Why did they let the misery wear on? It is said that the ultimate power in the hands of an unhappy non-executive director is that of resignation: Peter Ellwood, of Lloyds TSB did resign, but chose to do so quietly over Christmas. If his move was a gesture of protest, it was totally ineffective, and if it was not, then he too should be asked to make a contribution to that £500,000 that Strong is to pocket.

Markets call a Labour win

TOMORROW'S poll is reckoned to be such a foregone conclusion in the markets that the post-election bounce is happening before the election. Yesterday's sharp rise in the FTSE 100 index, taking it within a shrew's whisker of its March 11 high, owes something to Wall Street's rapid climb back up the

slippery pole. That is by no means the whole story. Sterling rose against the dollar as well as against the mark, to a level that is no more sustainable now than it was in 1992.

This is not a comment on the parties, unlike the 5 per cent share price jump after John Major's surprise 1992 win. Rather it is a natural expression of relief that one uncertainty is over. Markets rarely discount expected events fully, so there might well be enough of a rise on Friday to send the index into new territory, unless Wall Street takes a strong hand. Buying decisions stalled pending the result of the six-week campaign are simply being released.

No bets are now being taken

on Labour to win so, in time-honoured fashion, sporting traders are turning to the minutiae of the count to fine-tune their post-election tactics. A tiny majority or hung Parliament would go down badly; a landslide might revive foreign fears of the socialist monster. The world of finance, conducting its usual love affair with the tedious, hopes for a "sound" 40-60 seat majority.

Relief is unlikely to last long. Attention will soon shift to the planned May 7 meeting of the Chancellor and the Governor to discuss monetary policy. The foreign exchanges assume that if Gordon Brown attends, base rates will rise a quarter point. If Kenneth Clarke were there, this would not be self-evident.

Mr Brown is thought certain to accede to the Governor's inevitable request as a way of presenting his references to the Worshipful Company of Speculators. He could as easily deduce that there is no need, or put on half a point to send speculators packing or postpone the meeting for a week. Thereafter, speculation in the equity market will centre on Mr Brown's emer-

gency Budget, due in two months time. The timid institutional investor's search for certainty is doomed to endless frustration.

Achieving the impossible

HARRY MOORE, chief executive of Co-operative Retail Services, ended his results presentation yesterday by quoting the Labour Party theme tune: "Things can only get better." What he really meant to say was: "Things can't get much worse."

A loss of £13.9 million after restructuring charges of £18.1 million with sales slipping 0.9 per cent to £1.54 billion amounts to something most thought impossible.

The CRS has managed to produce an even more appalling set of figures than the Co-operative Wholesale Society, the business that was once its sister but is now its competitor.

Galvanised into action by the attentions of one Andrew Regan, the CWS has suggested that the two Co-operative organisations merge. But the CRS will have none of it, saying its own overtures in

that direction, most recently in 1994, were rudely spurned.

The prospect of co-operation now seems likely to be superseded by the sort of battle for supremacy commercial organisations play. A coming together has to happen eventually, but on whose terms? Moore reckons CRS has the better management and wants a couple of years to show this. The target is to invest £200 million this year in new systems, facias and stores, delivering 5 per cent return on sales (against 1.5 per cent now) and a 50 per cent rise in sales per square foot to £12.

This might not be much in the real world but under the arcane umbrella of the Co-op it gives Moore the ammunition to turn to the CWS and say: "We're clearly the better society. We should take control of the whole movement."

Do not pass 'Go'

NOMURA has added its name to the list of those who feel tarnished by the non-bid for CWS. In bringing so many big City names to such public humiliation, Andrew Regan has achieved the sort of coup some critics of the Square Mile might never have thought possible. He has also guaranteed that this is one thrusting young entrepreneur who will, in future, have to confine his ambitions to the Monopoly board.



Gilles Pélisson, marking the park's fifth anniversary with actresses Melanie Griffith and Ornella Muti, wants growth

Euro Disney losses grow as interest payments rise

By ADAM JONES

LOSSES at Euro Disney, the theme park operator, increased in the first half of 1997 after a rise in the interest payments demanded on its Fr15 billion debts, the company said yesterday.

In the six months to March 31, traditionally a low season, it lost Fr210 million compared with Fr169 million in the same period last year.

Euro Disney is 39 per cent owned by the Walt Disney Co. Prince al-Waleed bin Talal, the Saudi Arabian investor, took a 24 per cent stake in 1994. Turnover from its Disneyland Paris theme park and

resort rose 12.5 per cent to Fr1.2 billion over the six months as prices were held at 1996 levels. However, the interim results were dragged down by an Fr69 million rise in charges, to Fr356 million.

Euro Disney had enjoyed an interest payment holiday on some debts after its 1994 restructuring. These financing charges began to kick in again last year, to the tune of an extra Fr120 million. The additional cost in the full 1997 fiscal year is estimated to be Fr200 million. This should grow by a further Fr120 million in 1998.

Gilles Pélisson, chairman, said: "Disneyland Paris was managing seasonal fluc-

tions better. Growth in the high season remains vital to counter the sharp increase in financial charges."

A Euro Disney spokesman added that 1997 is the crunch year: "We will have to keep improving and improving to meet these financial charges. This year is going to be the most difficult."

A consistent year-on-year revenue rise of at least 5 per cent is needed to meet the extra finance and leasing costs.

A new cinema and conference centre will be opened in the next six months. He said there should also be room for admission fee increases in 1998. They are currently Fr150-

Fr195 for adults and Fr120-Fr150 for children. Income from commercial development of land near Disneyland Paris should come onstream in the same year.

However, royalty and management fees will have to be paid to Disney from 1998. The cost is estimated at about Fr200 million a year.

Euro Disney recorded a profit before exceptionalities of Fr16 million in 1996, only the second year it had been in the black. One analyst forecast Fr110 million this year. In London, Euro Disney shares fell to 103.1p from 107.1p.

Tempus, page 32

BA shares rise on USAir sale report

By OLIVER AUGUST

SHARES in British Airways rose yesterday amid speculation that it was close to announcing the sale of its 24.6 per cent stake in USAir.

They rose from 694p to 704p on speculation that it could be paid as much as \$30 million for its holding of preference shares, which has to be sold to at least five separate parties. A BA spokesman said: "We have moved a step closer to a sale."

BA paid \$400 million for its USAir stake in 1993, subsequently writing it down by £125 million in 1995 to reflect the American airline's precarious financial position at the time.

However, USAir's fortunes

have improved. Last year it resumed dividend payments which had been suspended in 1994. George Soros, the investor, recently sold his 5 per cent stake in USAir at a profit.

BA can sell its stake privately or in a public offering, but cannot sell the shares in one block without regulatory approval. Under the terms of purchase, BA cannot allow any buyer to hold more than 5 per cent of USAir's stock.

BA first said in December that it planned to sell its stake at a premium. Three BA directors have since resigned from USAir's board as the two carriers' divorce continues.

Air London given a lift by executive jets

By FRASER NELSON

DEMAND for executive jets has fuelled growth at Air London, the aircraft charter broker, which overcame a downturn in its holiday aircraft business to return record interim profits.

It blamed tight margins and costs of recruiting extra staff for the 17 per cent profits drop at its commercial aircraft division, but said the sharp jump in demand for private jets had overcome this.

Tony Mack, chairman, said: "The strength of our business is that one division can do well and the reverse can happen in the second half. But overall profits will always

go up." However, he said there is unlikely to be a repeat of last November's 10p special dividend in the near future.

Pre-tax profits rose 13 per cent to £1.12 million on sales up 10 per cent at £17.9 million. Earnings rose to 7.8p (6.5p) a share. The interim dividend is 2.5p (1.9p).

Mr Mack, who owns 60 per cent of the company, picked up £541,000 through the special dividend and stands to pocket £125,000 from the increased interim payout due on June 20. The shares, which have doubled in value over the past 12 months, fell to 243.1p from 251p.

Air London given a lift by executive jets

Tempus, page 32

Saints chairman to stand down

GUY ASHKHAM, who has been heavily criticised by fans for his role in the flotation of Southampton Football Club, yesterday said he will step down as chairman of the Saints at the end of season (Alasdair Murray writes).

Mr Askham, who has been chairman for eight years, will be replaced by Rupert Lowe, who is also chairman of Southampton Leisure, the club's holding company. Mr Askham will remain as deputy chairman of Southampton Leisure. Mr

Lowe said that Mr Askham had simply decided it was time to pass on the chairman's role. Mr Lowe added that the board had decided to appoint him in a dual capacity to help to shorten the lines of communication as the club moves towards building its new stadium.

Supporters have voiced concern over a deal in which several Southampton directors bought shares in the club from an investment company, formerly linked to Mr Askham, just weeks before the £10

million takeover by Secure Retirement Shares in the company closed down 22p on 90p.

Shares of Burnden Leisure, the new owner of Bolton Wanderers, closed at 62.5p on the first day of trading after touching a high of 77.5p. The company was formed via a reverse takeover of Bolton by Mosaic Investments, the investment vehicle of David Williams, the entrepreneur.

that direction, most recently in 1994, were rudely spurned.

The prospect of co-operation now seems likely to be superseded by the sort of battle for supremacy commercial organisations play. A coming together has to happen eventually, but on whose terms? Moore reckons CRS has the better management and wants a couple of years to show this. The target is to invest £200 million this year in new systems, facias and stores, delivering 5 per cent return on sales (against 1.5 per cent now) and a 50 per cent rise in sales per square foot to £12.

This might not be much in the real world but under the arcane umbrella of the Co-op it gives Moore the ammunition to turn to the CWS and say: "We're clearly the better society. We should take control of the whole movement."

Do not pass 'Go'

NOMURA has added its name to the list of those who feel tarnished by the non-bid for CWS. In bringing so many big City names to such public humiliation, Andrew Regan has achieved the sort of coup some critics of the Square Mile might never have thought possible. He has also guaranteed that this is one thrusting young entrepreneur who will, in future, have to confine his ambitions to the Monopoly board.

Cairn Energy and Shell in \$200m Asian alliance

By CARL MORTISHED

CAIRN ENERGY and Shell have entered into a \$200 million alliance to develop Cairn's gas interests in Bangladesh and to seek further upstream and power projects in Bangladesh, India and neighbouring Asian countries.

Cairn has agreed to give up half of its interest in two blocks offshore of Bangladesh, including a half share in Cairn's 75 per cent interest in the Sangu field, believed to contain more than a trillion cubic feet of gas in exchange. Shell will pay Cairn \$130 million and will fund all exploration and development costs, up to a total of \$200 million.

Cairn will immediately transfer a 25 per cent of its Bangladeshi interests to Shell, with the second 25 per cent dependent on the success of the Cairn/Shell alliance in securing new acreage in a forthcoming Bangladeshi oil licensing round.

Gammell: outlined objective



Gammell: outlined objective

The alliance creates an area of mutual interest (AMI) in Bangladesh, under which Cairn is entitled to up to a half share in any new upstream pipeline or power development, including gas into crude oil plants using Shell's proprietary technology. The alliance extends further into India, where the partners have created another area of mutual interest. The intention is to exploit the region's huge energy market, with the prospect of a pipeline to export gas from Bangladesh to India.

Cairn and Shell are now in discussions over prospects in neighbouring countries in Asia. Shares in the exploration company soared after the discovery of the Sangu gasfield last year, raising the prospect of further giant gasfields in the two offshore blocks under Cairn's control.

Tempus, page 32

AND IF YOUR MIND clamps shut at the mere mention of the word "million", consider this: If you add up your lifetime earnings - past and future - you will see that you will almost certainly earn a fortune in your lifetime. It could add up to a million pounds - or more.

The trouble is, like most people you'll want to spend it - and spend it.

Of course, what you could be doing is taking this fortune and turning some of it into another fortune - the one you want to end up with.

But you'll probably say you've been too busy to attend to this yourself - or perhaps managing money today just seems too complicated ...

Maybe you think you should entrust your money to an expert. If you do, you may be disappointed. The shocking truth is, professional fund managers are not much good at what they do. Most of them do more poorly than the Stockmarket as a whole. The only certainty about letting others manage your money is that you'll let them help themselves to a chunk of it through their fees.

IN FACT the widely accepted Random Walk theory says that you will beat the pros at picking shares by simply "hands-on", self-instruction course in investing and money management that you follow at home - at your own pace - with no pressure.

In simple language, it outlines step-by-step how to build your own financial independence ... and how to take the million or so you'll probably earn in your lifetime and get started on building the million you want to end up with - and all without depending on some "expert" - and without paying for advice that may not be truly independent.

THE SPI COURSE starts with the basics and then goes on to the "tricks of the trade" - the simple, tried and true techniques that enable you to protect and then maximise profits to build wealth even faster.

Firstly, most financial advisers aren't independent. They're not even allowed to call themselves that. That's because they're employed by the big financial fund managers to sell their products, and their products alone. They're really just salesmen.

So what about those who are allowed to call themselves independent financial advisers? Consider this fact: most IFAs earn their living from commission from the products they sell. Yet some of the best investments are run by firms which pay no commission. How likely do you think it is that they'll be on your IFAs shortlist of recommended investments if there's a commission-paying firm offering a similar service?

THE TIMES TODAY

WEDNESDAY APRIL 30 1997

NEWS

Rivals unite against euro chief

■ John Major and Tony Blair were united in condemnation yesterday of a European commissioner's call for Britain to be excluded from a seat at world financial summits if it did not join a single currency.

Kenneth Clarke also joined the criticism, so that Yves-Thibault de Silguy, the commissioner responsible for monetary union, achieved the rare feat of putting the Chancellor on the same side as his Eurosceptic critics Page 1, 9-16, 22, 23

British Library readers may have to pay

■ The British Library is exploring plans to introduce charges for its reading room. After 250 years of free access, it plans to broach the subject with its 400,000 readers by distributing a questionnaire this week. Members will be asked how they feel about 21 possible annual charges Page 1

Lord Taylor dies

Court hearings were halted as judges and lawyers gathered to pay tribute to Lord Taylor of Gosforth. The former Lord Chief Justice died of a brain tumour at his home in Guildford Page 1

Blair invokes Smith

Tony Blair invoked the memory of John Smith as he launched Labour's final push for victory with his predecessor's appeal for "the chance to serve" Page 1

Prison rampage

Loyalist prisoners went on the rampage at the Maze jail in protest at security restrictions Page 2

Boy George victory

Boy George did have a homosexual affair with the rock musician Kirk Brandon, a High Court judge ruled, rejecting a "malicious falsehood" action against the singer Page 3

Ugly art crime

An undercover policeman was sold a stolen picture of a woman "so ugly that only her son would have painted it" without one of the vendors realising it was *Portrait of his Mother* by Rembrandt, a court was told Page 4

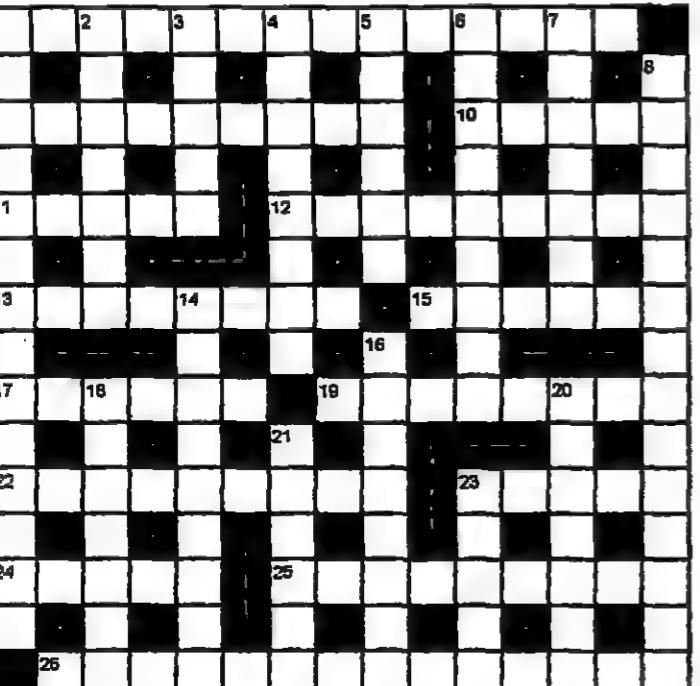
A lighter bite

British chocolate, already criticised by the European Union as a fraud upon the public, took another step on the road to degradation with the launch of two "low fat" chocolate bars Page 5

Family tree reveals far-flung branches

■ When Lord Tordoff's family grew tired of people asking if their surname was Russian, they decided to trace their roots. They did not bargain on an invitation to a family reunion in a Yorkshire village hall. Among the 300 people there were a Buddhist monk, an American clown, a novelist and a documentary film-maker from Devon — but no Russians Page 4

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,467



ACROSS

- Preliminary survey involving deception in revivalist movement (14).
- A French character on the staff? That's not normal (9).
- It's laughable, backing Liberal party (5).
- Grating officer finally installed in mess (5).
- Depric spy, somehow, as irritable (9).
- Plan suit in order to arrive at these? (8).
- Satisfy opposing players, returning prize (6).
- Row about doctor's deal, perhaps (6).
- Month in which no priest returned without honour (8).
- Symbol of this steel-maker's seen in outskirts of Milan (9).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,466

DEBASED OBEDIENT
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CHEVALIER ABHOR
1 ISBN NW ABE
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EE EEC OOD
RIDGE RAKEHILL
S P R E B
CINERAMA REVUE
A N IN N E L
BUFFOON GLASSES
SIFT TEFIT
OVERT IRRITABLE
R L E N S E L A
BADINAGE FRIEND



A fireman lights a flare amid a noisy demonstration in Chelmsford in support of striking Essex Fire Brigade staff. Page 2

BUSINESS

Co-op: The Serious Fraud Office is

to launch an investigation into a deal in 1995 between the Co-operative Wholesale Society and Hobson Group, a company then controlled by Andrew Regan Page 29

Economy: New consumer credit figures showed growth slowing in March. Total net lending fell from £3.06 billion in February to £2.55 billion last month Page 29

Telecoms: A group led by Carlton Communications has opened negotiations with BT over an alliance to launch digital television in terrestrial form Page 29

Markets: The FT-SE 100 rose 43.5 to close at 4432.2. Sterling rose from 99.9 to 100.3 after a rise from \$1.6237 to \$1.6310 and from DM2.8054 to DM2.8127 Page 32

SPORT

Football: England's World Cup qualifying tie against Georgia at Wembley is as much about recapturing a mood as securing three more points towards the finals Page 56

Cricket: Ireland beat Middlesex in the Benson and Hedges Cup to record their first victory over a first-class county side Page 56

Golf: Nick Faldo has surprisingly decided to return to Britain next month to compete in the Volvo PGA Championship at Wentworth, a favourite course Page 53

Racing: Tom Walkinshaw, whose TWR Group controls the Arrows Formula One motor racing team, has injected more than £2 million into the Gloucester club Page 39

ARTS

Depp charge: How Johnny Depp, the brightest of the brat-pack stars, tackled the role of an FBI agent going undercover to fight the mob in *Donnie Brasco* Page 37

New morality: For his latest play Joe Penhall, one of our brightest new writers, has abandoned murder and mayhem in favour of hard work and morality Page 38

Rising star: Neil Rutherford is acting in *Salad Days* on tour, composing a musical, playing in a film, and has just directed a revue. And he is only 27 Page 38

Hanging gardens: Stand in the centre of Sir Norman Foster's Commerzbank tower in Frankfurt and look up, and you peer into a 50ft vertical void filled with gardens Page 39

FEATURES

Nigella Lawson: The Spice Girls embody the belief that it is acceptable to appear sexually available but unacceptable to be treated as sexually available Page 21

Model citizen: "Why does MORI keep on polling me?" Ivan Barnes is the man with the real lead in the polls Page 21

STYLE

From the top: Stripes have moved from the sports ground to the street Page 20

Safe and secure: Jane Shilling on the similarity between the familiar item of clothing she is reluctant to throw away and the blanket from which her son hated being separated Page 20

MEDIA

Paper victory: Nothing so thrills editors as a general election and, says Brian MacArthur, the coverage this time has been fairer than usual Page 27

THE PAPERS

The majority has made public its electoral programme. The socialists should do the same before the end of the week and Lionel Jospin has just declared that it is time to enter into the heart of the drama. High time indeed. Because French people are showing a massive indifference towards the two big coalitions who are going to confront each other *Le Monde* Page 27

TV LISTINGS

Preview: It is surprising what people talk to their hairdressers about. *Modern Times: Shampoo* (BBC2, 8pm). Review: A new police series fails to melt Matthew Bond's cynicism Pages 54, 55

OPINION

Invisible election

If the Tories are evicted from office this week they will doubtless move swiftly to the leadership question. They would do well to consider the local democracy issue with equal intensity Page 23

Licence to murder

Despite the Berlin judgment, the US has far to go to convince Europe that Iran is still a threat to Western democracy Page 23

Canada high

For the first time in a generation, the election will not be about Canada's Constitution or its possible break-up. That is, in itself, a measure of Mr Chrétien's achievement Page 23

COLUMNS

BEN PIMLOTT

Labour's intellectuals are unashamedly vengeful: they relish the Tory collapse, the end of smirking and strutting, the ensuing civil war. They hope savagely that somebody really awful, like John Redwood, will become leader of the Conservative Party. Intellectuals are a superior lot. They look glibly at the quality of some members of Labour's front bench Page 22

ALAN COREN

I have always wanted to keep a dog, but they're a frightful liability: they have to be schooled, they have to be walked, they have to be vetted, they have to be groomed, they bite people, they chase cats, they foul footpaths, they eat that jellied muck you have to spoon out for them, and this strikes me as a great deal of trouble to go to just to enjoy their companionship Page 22

OBITUARIES

Lord Taylor of Gosforth, Lord Chief Justice of England, 1992-96; Sir Harry Peat, accountant; Eulalie Spicer, solicitor Page 25

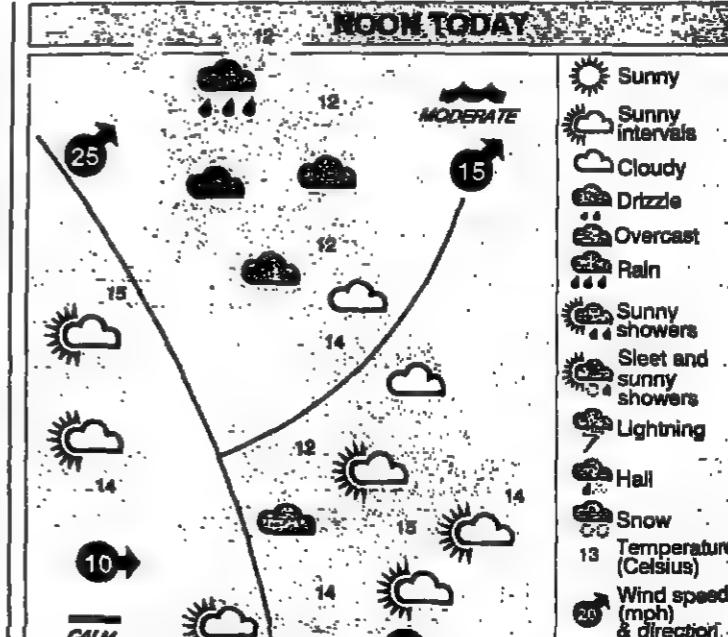
LETTERS

Labour and health: tactical voting for Eurosceptics; reform of the licensing laws; Norway's position in Europe; Shaw's classic plays; chocolate-flavoured carrots Page 23

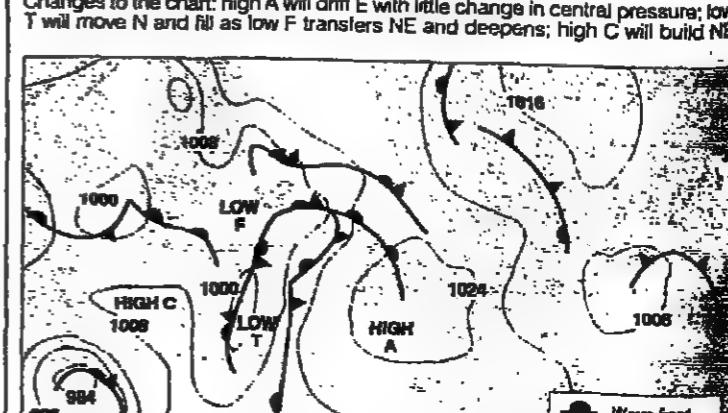
INSIDE SECTION
2 TODAY

SFC
BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM
AND JASON NISBET

Strong
line
£500
pay



Changes to the chart: high A will drift E with little change in central pressure; low N will move N and fall as low F transfers NE and departs; high C will build NE



Warm front
Cold front
Occluded front

High tides

TODAY AM HT PM HT TODAY AM HT PM HT

Aberdeen 06 49 63 20 61 10 23 31 10 13 12 14 17 17

Acornmouth 00 45 11 0 0 13 16 20 13 13 12 14 15 16

Bilbao 00 34 11 17 15 21 21 21 19 19 18 19 20 21

Cardiff 00 31 10 3 10 13 16 20 10 10 12 13 14 15

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All times BST. Heights in metres

HOURS OF DARKNESS

Sun rises 5:35 am Sun sets 8:22 pm

Moon rises 12:24 pm Moon sets 2:28 am

Last quarter today

London 8:22 pm to 5:33 am

Bristol 8:22 pm to 5:42 am

Edinburgh 8:37 pm to 5:29 am

Manchester 8:37 pm to 5:34 am

Pembroke 8:40 pm to 5:58 am

The US data also pushed the pound against the dollar, closing up 43.5

The pound against the mark in Frankfurt index climbed from 96.3 to 100.3

Fraser said the lack of concern in

US data also pushed the pound against the mark in Frankfurt index

index climbed from 96.3 to 100.3

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US data also pushed the pound against the mark in Frankfurt index

index climbed from 96.3 to 100.3

Election 97: who wins the Oscars?



PAPER ROUND

Brian MacArthur

For newspaper pundits it has been the most frustrating general election for 50 years. At the past three elections we have been appalled but entertained by the three main "Tory tabloids" — *The Sun*, *The Daily Mail* and *The Express* — as they savaged Michael Foot and Neil Kinnock.

The bias was blatant but the journalism was brilliant. Kelvin MacKenzie's front page on voting day in 1992 — "If Neil Kinnock wins today will the last person to leave Britain please turn out the lights" — is still remembered, still framed on office walls, five years later. As Joe Haines, once Harold Wilson's press secretary, observed acidly in *The Mirror*, if John Major were caught spending the nation's cash on a French actress, *The Express* would praise his concern for the arts and the *Daily Mail* would see it as further proof of his dedication to Europe.

Tony Blair has been determined that new Labour would not get the same treatment. That is why reporters have been so frustrated by the "control" shown during his campaign. He has also so transformed the Labour Party that most of the issues on which it was attacked are no longer in the manifesto, and assiduously courted editors and proprietors to sell the message that Labour no longer comes with a fair run.

The result has been an election in which Fleet Street and the "Tory" tabloids have given Labour an unprecedentedly fair run. No bias, no comment. With *The Sun*, with sales of 4 million a day, declaring for Mr Blair from the outset, the newspaper map was transformed. Eight out of ten of *The Sun's* 160 reports on Labour since April 1 have been neutral or favourable. So were about seven out of ten in *The Express* and the *Daily Mail*. The most partisan paper has been *The Mirror* for Labour. *The Daily Telegraph* has been least negative to the Tories and the *Daily Mail* most critical of Labour.

Yet nothing so thrills the blood of newspaper editors as a general election. An analysis by the MORI subsidiary, Test Research, sponsored by Shandwick, shows that there have been a total of 3,324 articles in the national daily and Sunday newspapers, with *The Times* publishing the

most dogged critic of Mr Blair. Peter Hitchens of *The Express* (who also wrote letters to *The Times* and *The Spectator*) has constantly harried the Labour leader about his plans to stop other parents following his example of sending their children to grant-maintained schools, earning the most tactless rebuke of the campaign: "We may not call you again if you're going to be bad."

Biggest nightmare. Polly Toynbee in *The Independent* who dreamt that Labour lost. "At 4am on May 2 I am planning a special exit poll of my own in which I shall stand in the High Street... and ask people how they voted. If they

say Tory, I will shoot them. a quick exit."

Newspapers that have most relished the election. After 18 years in opposition, there have been no inhibitions at *The Guardian* and *The Observer* about boring the readers, and a relish in their reporting that undoubtedly speaks to their constituencies. "Starting this week: a new era," *The Observer* announced last Sunday in

its biggest headlines in its history. *The Guardian* has devoted more space — 56,000 column centimetres — to the election than any other paper.

Star columnist in the making. Richard Eyre, director of the National Theatre, in *The Financial Times*.

"You might find an Iago in Peter Mandelson, a Malvolio in Brian Mawhinney, a Cassius in Michael Heseltine, a

Claudius in Baroness Thatcher, an Enobarbus in John Prescott, a Lear in Sir Edward Heath and a Jacques in Tony Benn. Lord Tebbit might make a good Fool and you could find plenty of clowns in all parties..."

Most violent columnist. Polly Toynbee in *The Independent*: "The trouble with democracy is the voters. Listening to them sometimes makes you despair

— they are stupid, selfish, pig-ignorant, horrible... one more vox pop from some cretin saying, 'They're all the same, aren't they? They're only in it for themselves' and I'll be reaching for my revolver."

Dumbed down? Only paper to publish the manifesto in full. *The Times*. All the rest published only extracts.

Most bizarre spectacle. Lord

Hollick, chairman of United News and Media, owner of *The Express*, arguing for Labour, and Lord Stevens, the chairman, arguing for the Conservatives on a double-page spread in *The Express* on Sunday. Both papers opted for the Conservatives — but at least Mr Blair got more than a word in edgeways.

Most forthcoming proprietor. Lord Rothermere, owner

of the Eurosceptic *Daily Mail* in an interview with the *Financial Times*: "Sometimes I think [Paul Dacre, Editor of the *Mail*] would like to row England out into the middle of the Atlantic. I am not sure that is what I want to do."

As the six-week campaign ends, Mr Blair has won more endorsements from Fleet Street — 11 out of 19 — than at any time in living memory.

Dailies for Mr Blair: *The Sun*, *The Mirror*, *The People*, *The Observer* and *The Independent* (both suggesting tactical voting against the Tories) and the *Financial Times*. Sales: 8 million.

Dailies for Mr Major: *The Express*, *The Daily Telegraph* and (almost certainly) *The Daily Mail*. Sales: 4.5 million.

Eurosceptic *The Times*.

Sundays for Mr Blair: *The News of the World*, *The Sunday Mirror*, *The People*, *The Observer* and *The Independent* (both suggesting tactical voting). Sales: 9.6 million.

Sundays for Mr Major: *The Express*, *The Mail*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Sunday Telegraph*. Sales: 3.5 million.

After the last election, the big question was whether it was *The Sun* "not won it". MORI research suggests that it won't be this time. Readers' declared voting intentions have hardly shifted at all during this campaign.



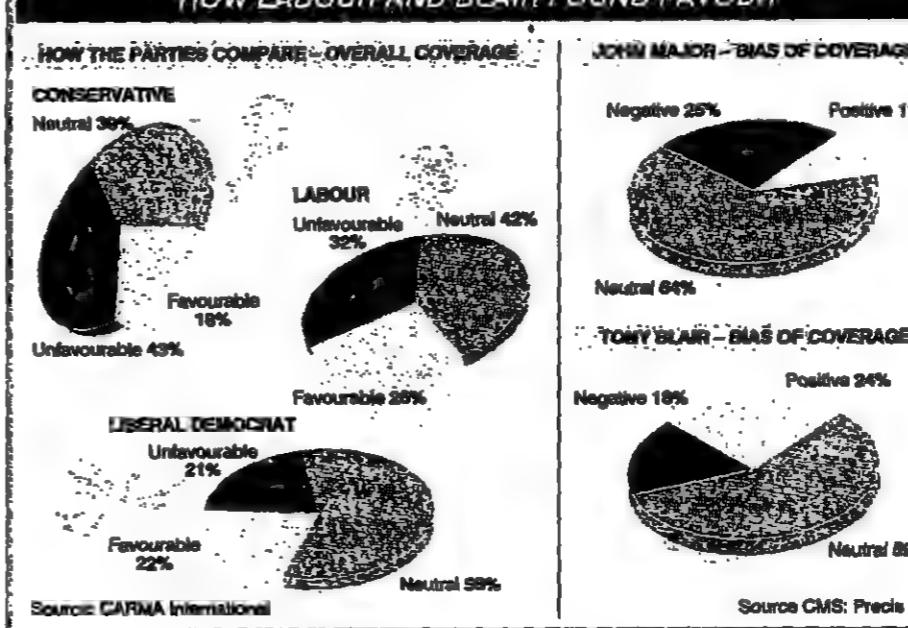
Despite the stirring newspaper headlines, MORI research suggests that readers' declared voting intentions have hardly shifted at all during this election campaign

BIASED TOWARDS NEUTRALITY

Researchers examined news stories relating to policies and graded them from -2 to +2 according to their negative/positive bias. The percentage of stories in each scale was used to calculate each paper's bias index towards each party.

TORY POLICIES	Cuttings	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	Index	
Mirror	152	7	81	17	18	1	-1.94 (-1.18)	
Sun	90	4	22	2	48	12	6	-42 (21)
Star	79	4	22	10	47	19	3	-29 (17)
Express	124	6	13	15	60	10	3	-25 (26)
Mail	142	7	14	10	61	14	1	-22 (6)
Telegraph	271	13	7	15	98	2	0	-19 (19)
Guardian	207	10	13	10	52	2	0	-26 (19)
Independent	578	18	9	15	68	4	3	-24 (19)
Times	396	18	9	14	70	3	3	-23 (14)
	275	13	4	23	53	7	2	-20 (3)

Source: MORI Test Research April 1-25. The figures in brackets are the paper's index score for the first half of the campaign, April 1-11.



All the news that's fit to see

Ben Neuharth, the founder of *USA Today*, has proved that a museum dedicated to journalism like a good newspaper or a television newscast, need not be dull. The Newseum, his glitzy \$50 million brainchild, opened last weekend just across the Potomac River from Washington and immediately drew throngs of visitors.

Young and old enjoyed playing interviewer in television newsroom mock-ups and browsing among the front pages downloaded that day from newspapers around the world.

Under the approving gaze of a statue of Thoth, the ancient Egyptian god of scribes, the Newseum displays the history of spreading the news. Exhibits range from 6,000-year-old Algerian rock paintings to an eye-blurring stream of network satellite feeds disgorging breaking news on to a video screen 40 yards across.

Here, too, is a copy of *Public Occurrences*, the first newspaper in British North America, published in 1690, with the back page conveniently left blank so that readers could add their own news before passing it on.

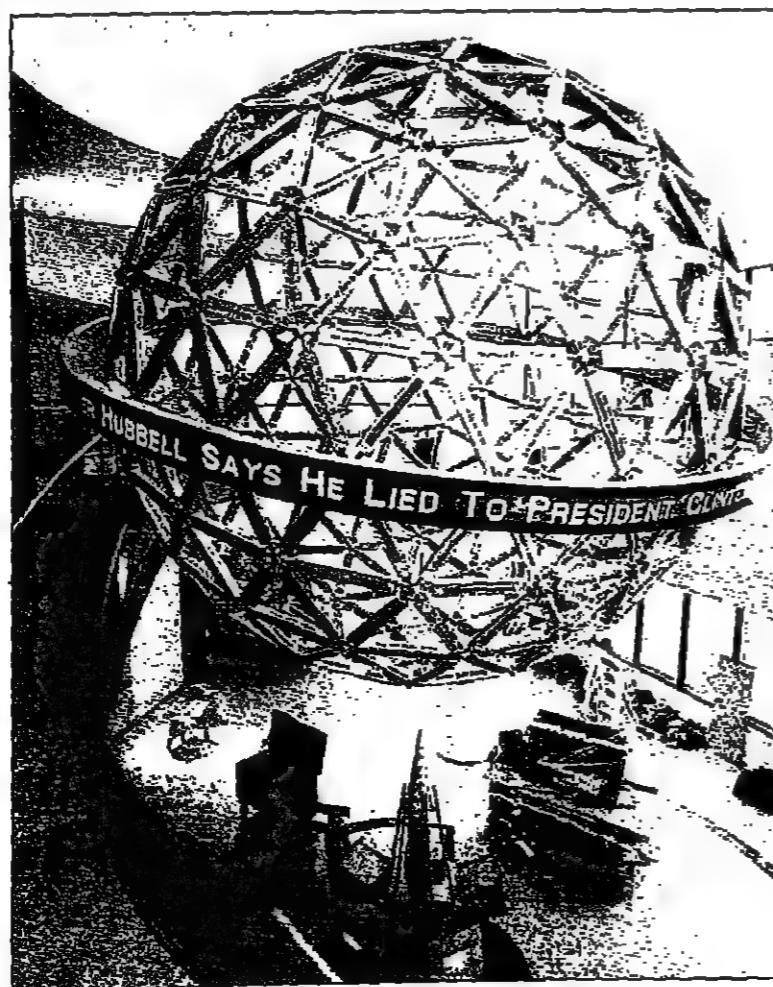
A glance at a bank of TV screens reveals the Berlin Wall falling, Challenger blowing up, Reagan being shot, Kennedy being buried. A mini-cinema shows clips of how Hollywood has portrayed the news business, mostly peopled by tough, scruffy, romantic idealists with a tendency to drink too much and to shout into telephones. "OK sweetheart, get me Rewrite."

As Mr Neuharth would say, that is the who, what, when and where of his Newseum. The why takes longer to explain.

Mr Neuharth is chairman of the Freedom Forum, a foundation dedicated to free speech, free press and free spirit. It is supported by an endowment worth more than \$350 million from Gannett, the publisher of *USA Today*, which is America's largest circulation daily.

Several years ago Mr Neuharth and his trustees became worried about growing antagonism between the public and the press. They concluded that the public's standards for journalism are higher than ever, though some

Hold the front page: a press museum is making headlines, reports Ian Brodie



Lines of communication: the Newseum in Washington is drawing crowds

journalists may not fully understand that, and that mainstream journalism is better than ever, but the public may not fully realise that, either.

So as well as appealing to busloads of tourists and children on school outings, the Newseum tries to pose serious questions about the power of the media and its ethics. For example, at one computer screen, visitors are

asked to decide how they would respond to the following dilemma: a newspaper receives an exclusive tip that a famous athlete, now retired, has been diagnosed with AIDS. Should the story be pursued and published, or should the athlete's privacy be respected, given that he is no longer in the public eye?

Just such a predicament faced *USA*

asked to decide how they would respond to the following dilemma: a newspaper receives an exclusive tip that a famous athlete, now retired, has been diagnosed with AIDS. Should the story be pursued and published, or should the athlete's privacy be respected, given that he is no longer in the public eye?

The Newseum is not the place to explore these issues in any depth. It is fun, fast and informative. Better still, it may tempt more than a few of its younger visitors to choose careers as ink-stained wretches or blow-dried talking heads.

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Sears turns to cost-cutting company doctor

DAVID JAMES, the executive Sears has brought in to sort out its ailing shoe shops, loves to get his hands on failing businesses. "It's the bad days that are really the fun," he once said. "The day I stop enjoying the bad days, I'll retire."

British Shoe Corporation has had plenty of bad days in the past few years. Sears' attempts to revitalise the business have all led nowhere. Familiar brands such as Freeman Hardy Willis and Saxon have departed to be replaced by the uninspiring new concepts, Shoe Express and Shoe City. Nothing has worked—least of all last year's debacle of "the sale that wasn't a sale" to Stephen Hinchliffe's Facia Group. Yesterday's results showed British Shoe falling to a £9.1 million loss on sales of £465.4 million.

By Mr James's standards, British Shoe looks in robust financial health. Over the past ten

years, he has been the banks' firefighter at a series of companies on the verge of collapse. His casebook includes Eagle Trust, the victim of an astonishingly brazen fraud; Dan-Air, the charter airline that failed to make it through the recession; and LEP Group, the freight distribution company crushed under a mountain of debt. As a council member of Lloyd's of London, he was at the heart of the rescue deal that secured a future for the insurance market.

Mr James's skills are slashing debts, cutting costs, making disposals and, with his lawyers,

chasing culprits who might be leant upon to hand back money. He cuts out the cancer, but is not a business builder. That Sears finds it necessary to turn to him underscores the fundamental nature of the problems at British Shoe.

Arguably Britain's foremost company doctor, Mr James loves the job, happily working punishing days of 16 hours or more. Each day starts at 8am with a three-mile run in Hyde Park. Unmarried at 59, his passions outside work are opera and cricket. He is chairman of the English Symphony Orchestra. His boast is that he

has never put a trading company into receivership. He and his team, who tend to move with him from one crisis to the next, claim to have saved 23,000 jobs over the past 14 years, and to have recovered £80 million of bank debt.

It is certainly the banks who have most to thank for him. Shareholders have often fared less well. Though LEP's businesses were saved, the parent company eventually went down with nothing for shareholders. Eagle Trust shareholders received only a token recovery of 1p a share. Mr James has previously complained that the days of the company doctor were ending, since banks no longer have the patience for protracted turnarounds. However, the increased activism among institutional shareholders—such as led to his appointment at Sears—has prompted him to revise his opinion.

NIESR calls for higher tax rather than rate rises

BY ALASDAIR MURRAY

AN INFLUENTIAL economic think-tank has called on the next Chancellor to raise taxes rather than interest rates to help to maintain a healthy economy.

The National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) gave warning that economic policy was becoming "unbalanced" with monetary policy too tight and fiscal policy too loose.

In its latest economic review NIESR argues that the high exchange rate is keeping the lid on inflation. But it adds that taxes will need to rise by about £3.5 billion to place government finances on a more sustainable basis.

The institute predicts that the strong pound, which has

risen by 15 per cent since last August, will restrict GDP growth to 2.5 per cent this year, well below the Treasury forecast of 3.5 per cent growth.

The manufacturing sector will be especially hit with NIESR predicting it will grow just 2 per cent, compared with 7 per cent growth in the business services sector.

NIESR forecasts that inflation will end next year at 2.1 per cent, well below the 2.5 per cent target level adopted by both main parties.

NIESR is also more sanguine than many commentators about the tightening labour market. It believes that there is substantially more slack in the labour market

than in 1990 pointing to an increase in the size of the working population. The proportion of the potential workforce not employed is higher at 26 per cent, compared with 22 per cent in 1990.

But NIESR predicts that the next government will ignore its rate recommendations and raise rates by half a point. A separate report from the institute warns that the Government's balance sheet is worsening despite recent falls in borrowing. NIESR says that to place government finances on a sustainable basis the next Chancellor will need to stabilise the ratio of public sector net worth to GDP.

■ The number of company

failures rose in the first three months of the year, although the underlying trend remains downwards. KPMG, the accountancy firm, recorded 340 receiverships between January and March, a 14.5 per cent increase on the three months to December when it recorded 297 failures. But KPMG said the number of receiverships had fallen by 23 per cent compared with the first quarter of 1996. Manufacturing companies accounted for third of all failures, with retail and finance 10 per cent and 12 per cent in construction.

Anthony Harris, page 33

A&L sells estate agency

BY ADAM JONES

ALLIANCE & Leicester yesterday announced the sale of its commercial estate agency business, Stiles Harold Williams, to a management buyout team for an initial £250,000.

The sale represents the former building society's final withdrawal from estate agency, having written off £40 million for the

purpose in 1995. It will have no further effect on this year's results.

The buyout team comprises 14 senior staff, headed by Robert Stiles. The money was raised privately. An additional £25,000, or one third of post-tax profit, whichever is the higher, will also be paid to the bank for three years.



Considering new debt: Stephen Davidson, chief executive

TeleWest to consider \$300m 'junk bond' debt

BY ERIC REGULY

TELEWEST Communications, the second-largest cable company, is preparing to raise another \$300 million in "junk bond" debt. Analysts said the new debt is likely to be expensive and could trigger a slide in the share price.

Alan Lyons, analyst at Hoare Govett, said the prospect of another layer of debt has helped to push down the shares from about 120p in February to a recent low of 84p. The shares, issued at 182p in late 1994, closed at 90½p, giving TeleWest a market capitalisation of £835 million.

Mr Lyons said the debt could carry interest charges as high as 13 per cent, compared to about 9 per cent for its existing £1.2 billion revolving credit facility.

TeleWest, led by Stephen Davidson, chief executive, raised about £1.2 billion in "junk bond" debt in 1995, when it purchased the rival SBC cable company.

Charles Burdick, finance director, would not comment on the new deal other than to say the company has made no firm commitment to proceed.

TeleWest would use the new funds to convert the network to digital technology and order digital set-top boxes for cable TV customers.

Cable and Wireless Communications, the phone and cable company formed on Monday, would like to buy TeleWest through a share swap and wants to see the price come down.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

British Steel cuts 400 jobs at tin-plate sites

BRITISH STEEL is to shed 400 more jobs in a cost-cutting move at its two tin-plate plants in South Wales. The redundancies were confirmed last night as part of a re-organisation after overcapacity in the tin-plate industry throughout Europe and the effects of the strong pound on export orders. The company said it was hoped that the job losses could be achieved voluntarily with union agreement.

About 150 posts will go at Ebbw Vale in the Gwent Valleys and at Trostre, Llanelli, in the next 12 months. The others will also be spread over the two plants between next year and March 1999. The job cuts are the first since British Steel announced a five-year restructuring programme to increase its competitiveness. Ebbw Vale and Trostre plants currently employ 3,000 people. British Steel shares remained unchanged at 144½p.

Boeing's satellite link

BOEING, the US aircraft maker, is to build a \$9 billion network of several hundred low-orbit communications satellites as part of a partnership with Teledesic Inc, the communications company part-owned by Bill Gates, chairman of Microsoft. Boeing will also invest up to \$100 million in Teledesic, giving it a 10 per cent stake in the privately held company. Teledesic's other primary investor is Craig McCaw, builder of the world's largest telephone company.

PepsiCo ahead 8%

PEPSICO, the American, food and beverages company whose brands embrace Pizza Hut, KFC, Taco Bell and Frito Lay, lifted first-quarter earnings 8 per cent to \$427 million. Sales rose to \$6.7 billion from \$6.55 billion. Case sales of soft drinks grew 6 per cent, driven by double-digit volume growth for Mountain Dew and solid growth in Pepsi. But international sales were down 14 per cent. The restaurants businesses, which are to be divested, lifted profits 7 per cent.

Optometrics deal off

SHARES in Optometrics are expected to fall sharply today after the engineering group said yesterday that the previously announced deal for Peter Levine to buy 52 per cent of the shares had been called off. Mr Levine and other potential investors said they had halted plans after following due diligence procedures. Mr Levine had intended to become chairman. The Levine deal had been announced on April 14 at a share price of 16½p, against 23½p, up 1p, last night.

Seaboard cuts prices

SEABOARD, the electricity company serving two million customers in Kent, Sussex and Surrey, is cutting electricity prices from July 1. Typical annual bills will fall by about £10, while those paying by direct debit will save £14. Standing charges are being cut for the third year in a row, this time by around 25 per cent. At £3.26 a quarter, charges for standard domestic customers have been reduced by more than two thirds in the past five years. Seaboard said.

Guardian growth plan

GUARDIAN ROYAL EXCHANGE, the insurance group, said trading in the first three months of 1997 had been "satisfactory". Speaking to the company's annual meeting, Lord Hambro, chairman, said the group had a "clear strategy for the future". He confirmed that it intended to expand the life and health insurance business both organically and by acquisition, but stressed the company would not be tempted to pay too much for any business.

Warning by Stylo

STYLO, the footwear and sportswear group that bought Hush Puppies from Sears in September, has said that it is unlikely to turn the acquisition into profit until August. The company, which expected Hush Puppies to be in the black from the off, said serious supply problems had left the stores with a sharp deficit of stock. Together with the Saxone shoe stores, the two acquisitions made a £1.44 million loss. This forced overall pre-tax profits to £2.82 million (£3.86 million) and earnings to 3.5p a share (6.45p). The final dividend is held at 4.66p.

MAM's £250m of credit

MERCURY ASSET MANAGEMENT, the UK fund manager, has raised a £250 million line of credit for use in an emergency. The credit-raising exercise, which was led jointly by JP Morgan, the US securities house, and Royal Bank of Scotland was oversubscribed. In February, Hugh Stevenson, MAM chairman, said the credit line was a matter of "prudence" and was nothing to do with a rumoured share buyback after the company's financial year end on March 31.

Print chief makes £3m

TIMOTHY BRETELL, founder and chairman of Access Plus, has raised £3 million after selling a third of his stake in the specialist printing company. Mr Bretell was joined by Nick Haigh and Chris Pope, finance director, who sold stakes worth £902,000 and £451,000 respectively. The shares were placed with institutions at 148p each, against the flotation price of 90p five months ago. Yesterday, the shares, which trade on the Alternative Investment Market, stayed at 155p.

Mellon to state view on Co-op row

BY ROBERT MILLER, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

JIM MELLON, chairman of Regent Pacific, the Hong Kong fund manager that holds a near 4 per cent stake in the troubled Hambros, is expected to return to his assault on the banking group, and publicly state his forthright views on its role in the Co-op debacle, early next week.

Analysts in the City believe Monday's fulsome apology by Sir Chips Keswick, chairman of Hambros Bank, to the Co-operative Wholesale Society for its actions while working for Andrew Regan, the businessman who abandoned his bid for the Co-op last week, marks a watershed for the banking to estate agency group.

This week Mr Mellon, aged 40, who has in the past been a vociferous critic of the Hambros management, has been in "purdah" while he makes last-

minute presentations to institutional pension and life funds in the Crown Colony, the United States and Europe ahead of next Monday's partial flotation of Regent on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange. Fund managers attending the presentations say that Regent made an as yet unreported pre-tax profit in the year ending March 31 of \$US30 million, a 40 per cent rise on the previous year.

The Hong Kong listing will release about \$55 million and Mr Mellon is expected to use some of the funds to increase Regent's stake in Hambros. Profit forecasts for Hambros are around £7 million, better than the £12 million loss the previous year.

Tempus, page 32
City Diary, page 33

Health insurance seen as a necessity within ten years

Survey reveals fears for NHS

BY MARIANNE CURRYPY
INSURANCE CORRESPONDENT

DESPITE assurances from both major political parties, the vast majority of people believe the National Health Service will be dismantled within 50 years, according to a survey by Bupa, the UK's largest healthcare provider.

More than 70 per cent believe they will need private medical insurance within ten years and one third of the 2,000 people questioned thought emergency treatment in hospital would not be free within ten years. The study, commissioned for

Bupa's fiftieth anniversary, found that almost 70 per cent expected to have to meet the full cost of residential care for the elderly within a decade.

However, despite the concerns expressed by those who took part in the survey, there is no indication that demand for medical insurance is increasing. The number of people buying cover has increased by only 70,000 to 5.7 million over the past decade—an estimated 10 per cent of the population. This figure hides a boom in the 1980s and a decline during the recession of the early 1990s. Consumers have been discouraged by

the cost of comprehensive cover and poor publicity surrounding the industry as a whole. Last year the Office of Fair Trading criticised providers for not giving enough detail about policy cover, making comparisons difficult.

Medical insurance is widely perceived as expensive and premiums have been increasing. There have also been a number of disputes over the scope of insurance cover.

Bupa has 45 per cent of the market, down from its peak of 75 per cent in 1970s. While PPP has increased its market share by 4 per cent to 27 per cent.

TOURIST RATES

Bank Buy	Bank Sale	Bank Buy	Bank Sale
Australia \$ 2.18	2.01	0.650	0.663
Austria Sch 60.98	59.54	3.031	3.063
Canada \$ 2.395	2.212	1.025	1.122
Cyprus Cyp 0.875	0.806	263.50	272.50
Denmark Kr 11.24	10.40	5.40	5.50
Finland Fim 0.95	0.85	247.30	250.50
France Fr 0.90	0.81	13.44	12.41
Germany DM 2.90	2.73	2.18	2.22
Greece Dr 450	420	226.00	211.64
Hong Kong \$ 13.11	12.10	107	102
Iceland Kr 1.27	1.16	1.00	1.00
Ireland P 1.10	1.08	1.16	1.16
Italy Lira 2,955	2,720	2,140	2,140
Japan Yen 210.70	203.20	1.722	1.722

Rates for small denominations. Bank rates only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to Traveler's Cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

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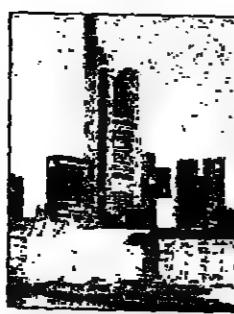
We believe it's only fair that if the basis of the original calculations change, such as maintenance, depreciation, or residual value, we either absorb any loss, or we refund customers any surplus.

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THE TIMES



INSIDE
SECTION
2
TODAY



ARTS

The tower with
its gardens
on the inside
PAGES 37-39



HOMES

Lutyens gem a
walk away from
Westminster
PAGES 47



SPORT

Why football's star
turns are facing
life on the shelf
PAGES 48-56

**TELEVISION
AND
RADIO
PAGES
54, 55**

BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

WEDNESDAY APRIL 30 1997

SFO launches Regan inquiry

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM
AND JASON NISSE

THE Serious Fraud Office has begun an investigation into the "Trellis" payment, the £2.4 million paid by a company controlled by Andrew Regan in 1995 to extend a £25 million-a-year contract with the Co-operative Wholesale Society.

The inquiry is a further blow to Mr Regan, who was forced last week to abandon plans to bid for CWS and who now faces civil and private criminal prosecution by CWS. Mr Regan has this week lost the services of Hambros, his bank, and Travers Smith Braithwaite, his solicitor, both of whom have apologised and paid substantial damages to CWS. The SFO will look at the circumstances surrounding the extension of a contract for Hobson, a food manufacturer then run by Mr Regan, to

supply the CWS. As part of the deal, a £2.4 million payment was made to Trellis International, a British Virgin Islands company controlled by Ronald Zimet, an Anglo-Israeli businessman.

Mr Zimet resigned as chairman of Freepages, the AIM-listed group, on Monday but retains a 22 per cent stake in the group, worth £30 million.

In a letter to Mr Regan

dated April 23, Graham Melmoth, chief executive of CWS, wrote: "Mr Zimet got his instructions from you late on 19th January [1995]. Then, miraculously, only three working days later, Mr Zimet announces that he has overcome the intractable negotiating problem which you say you faced. The deal is then done within hours and you pay him £2.4 million. I find

that extraordinary. What did Mr Zimet do to earn £2.4 million in three days?"

Hobson was subsequently bought by Hillsdown Holdings, the food group, which passed all files relating to the deal to CWS two weeks ago.

These documents were then handed over to the SFO by CWS lawyers. CWS and Hillsdown have said yesterday that they would co-operate

fully with the SFO. Neither Mr Regan nor his business partner David Lyons, nor anyone else at Lanica Trust, the investment company run by Mr Regan, or at Galileo, the company set up to make the CWS bid, were available to comment.

SBC Warburg, the merchant bank that then advised Hobson, said it was not aware of the payment when it was

made in January 1995, learning of it two months later. It resigned shortly afterwards.

Peter Large, the director in charge of the Hobson account, subsequently left to join Hambros, where he advised first Hobson and later Mr Regan's Galileo consortium.

KPMG, Hobson's auditor, said it was given assurances about the payment so that it

**BUSINESS
TODAY**

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FTSE 100 4432.2 (1.43%)
FTSE All share 2134.85 (16.28%)
Nikkei Closed
New York 6862.60 (+105.59%)
Dow Jones 785.71 (+13.75%)

US RATE

Federal Funds 8.74%* (5.14%)
Long Bond 9.67%* (5.21%)
Yield 7.01%* (7.11%)

LONDON MONEY

3-mth Interbank 6.1%* (6.1%)
Lift long gilt future (Jun) 106.1%* (106.1%)

STERLING

New York 1.8220* (1.8247)
London 1.8213 (1.8244)
S 2.8139 (2.8040)
FFr 8.4573 (8.4561)
SFr 2.3525 (2.3562)
Yen 206.77 (205.46)
E Index 100.3 (99.8)

US \$1

London 1.7846* (1.7828)
Doll 8.3160* (8.3403)
FFr 1.4666* (1.4733)
SFr 126.82* (126.88)
Yen 108.2 (108.2)

YEN/DOLLAR

Tokyo close Yen 128.73

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Jul) \$18.85 (\$18.98)

GOLD

London close \$338.95 (\$340.05)

* denotes midday trading price

Tax rises

The National Institute of Economic and Social Research is calling upon the next Chancellor to raise taxes, instead of raising interest rates. Economists believe monetary policy is too tight but that fiscal policy is too slack. Page 30

Rising losses

Losses at Euro Disney, the theme park operator, increased in the first half of 1997 after a rise in interest payments. Page 31

Strong in line for £500,000 payoff

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

LIAM STRONG, chief executive of Sears, is set to receive a payoff of up to £500,000 when he leaves the company in June.

Mr Strong, who has faced mounting pressure to resign during the past 18 months, is on a two-year contract and was paid £412,000 last year. He will receive a year's salary plus some pension contributions when he leaves, the company said yesterday.

Sears confirmed that, after repeated delays, it is to sell Freemans, its mail-order arm, to Littlewoods. The price is £367.5 million, but Sears is expected to net only £318 million from the deal, which is subject to Monopolies and Mergers Commission approval. The cash will go towards £370 million special dividend (equivalent to 24p a share) at the end of this year. Investors were originally promised £40 million. Selfridges is to be spun off and analysts estimate that it will be worth about £580 million as a standalone business.

David James, a leading company doctor, has been brought in as executive chairman of the struggling British Shoe Corporation. Sir Bob Reid, chairman of Sears, said several buyers have been sniffing around each of the four British Shoe chains. Docks and Cable & Co may be retained as part of the clothing business which will form the core of the new Sears.

Mr James says the main problem is with Shoe Express. The management at Shoe City has convinced him they believe in the brand's possibilities but claim it suffered from being restricted to a narrow range. He said "I have to act fast." He described BSC as "a painful boil which has to be lanced."

Sir Bob said Sears may sell majority stakes in some of the shoe businesses, but keep a

minority share. No closures are expected by the company. Mr Strong said the shoe business had property worth £80 million, meaning that the maximum write-off that may arise would be £120 million.

Mr Strong, who has been chief executive for five years, delivered his last set of group results yesterday. In the year to January 31, Sears made a pre-tax profit of £68.1 million against a loss of £119.7 million a year ago. The final dividend stays at 2.95p. The total remains at 3.95p.

Sir Bob said the current low

Sears share price reflected an

undervaluation of the assets.

The shares were unchanged

yesterday at 77.1p. Sean Eddie, retail analyst at NatWest Markets, said the restructuring looked complex and "not been fully thought out".

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STOCK MARKET



MICHAEL CLARK

L&G driven to record by talk of Halifax bid

SHARES of Legal & General surged 221p to a high of 431p amid mounting speculation that it may be the first bid target for the Halifax Building Society after it loses its mutual status on the way to a stock market listing in June.

There was heavy trading in Legal & General shares yesterday, with 6.77 million having traded by the close compared with the normal market size of 25,000 shares. At these levels the group, which is one of Britain's biggest insurers, carries a price tag of £5 billion. That compares with the £10 billion capitalisation that the Halifax is expected to command after it takes its place as a constituent of the top 100 companies.

The Legal & General share price has risen spectacularly during the past couple of weeks from around the 382p level. It went ex the 10p dividend on Monday.

Brokers are convinced that the Halifax will wish to use its new-found financial muscle and diversify into other areas. Legal & General is seen as a logical target. Business has been booming among the insurers, as figures for new business among personal equity plans have revealed.

Among those also to make headway were Prudential, up 131p at 6041p, United Assurance, up 71p at 474p, Britannia, up 8p at 834p, and London and Manchester, up 51p at 416p.

Elsewhere, share prices and government bonds put in a late rally to close sharply higher as the threat of an imminent rise in US interest rates eased, for the time being at least.

Investors in London took heart from a surge of 113 points in the Dow Jones industrial average that accompanied weaker than expected durable goods and employment cost numbers.

The FT-SE 100 index, having traded in narrow limits for much of the day, took off after news of the US numbers filtered through. It closed just a shade below its best of the day with a rise of 43.5 at 4,433.2. A total of 916 million shares changed hands. All eyes are now on Friday's US non-farm payrolls.

Undevel eased 2p to 16.21p after a presentation given by Procter & Gamble, its biggest rival, in London yesterday. The American group is threatening to challenge



Mosaic, new owners of Bolton Wanderers, rose 91p

Unilever in a number of key areas in the European market.

Reuters marked time at 63p. The company is due to give a presentation to brokers in New York today.

Brokers had their heads down yesterday busily recalculating their numbers over the break-up value of Sears, the ailing Selfridges and Freemans retailer, un-

plus despite losses in the region of £20 million this year.

The rump of the business will be worth another 40p and the sale of Freemans could bring in a further 24p of cash.

News of a bid approach for APY came at the close of business, with the price already showing a 5p rise at 71p on turnover of 14 million. The Stock Exchange will no doubt

What is behind the heavy turnover in Dragon Oil, a favourite with punters? Almost 30 million shares changed hands yesterday as the price rose 1p to 4p. There are 5.4 billion shares in issue, valuing the company at £216 million. If it reaches 20p, the group is in line to become a constituent of the FT-SE 250.

changed at 771p. This follows confirmation that Liam Strong, chief executive, is stepping down, and Selfridges will be demerged. Credit Lyonnais Laing calculates the break-up value at 80p, while Nick Bubb, at MeesPierson, opts for the highest price tag, of 110p at £300 million.

Optometrics closed 1p firmer at 231p, but is expected to open sharply lower this morning. Peter Levine and a consor-

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How long will benefits last as US bids farewell to welfare?

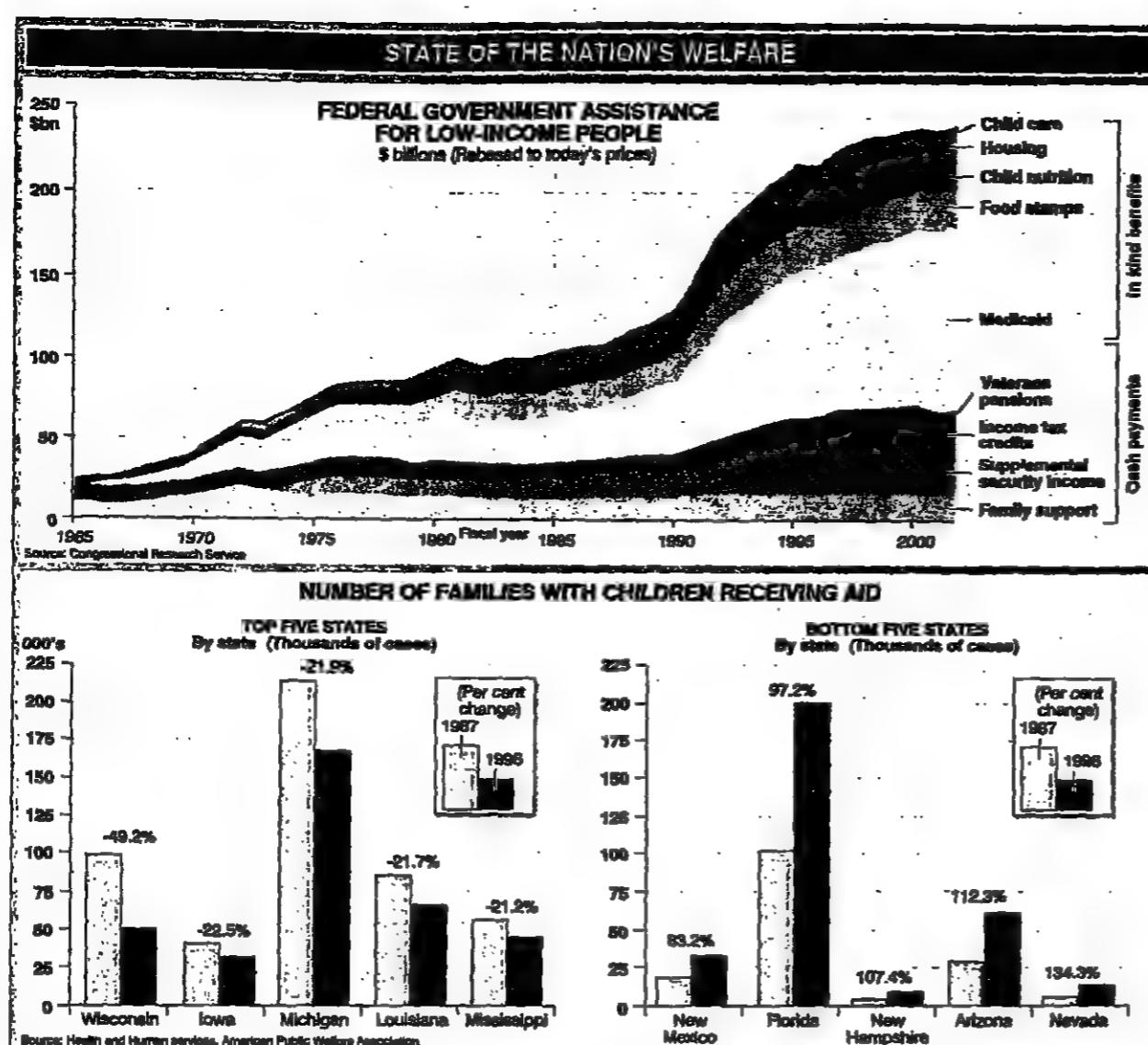
**Bronwen
Maddox**
looks at
America's
biggest social
experiment

On Friday, Washington will unveil its latest memorial: a monument to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, inscribed with the 1933 speech in which he offered the United States a "New Deal", including a safety net for its poorest citizens. The tributes do not mention that the US, in one of its most radical social experiments for decades, is now overhauling Roosevelt's legacy with a comprehensive programme of welfare reform.

Whichever party wins the British election tomorrow, it will look closely at the results emerging from the transatlantic laboratory. Both Labour and Conservatives have promised to reform welfare and help the long-term unemployed back to work. Yet so far, each has stopped short of America's bluntness: cutting off benefits for those who do not find jobs.

In signing, last August, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act, which was drawn up by the Republican-controlled Congress, President Clinton promised to "end welfare as we know it". For the first time, the new law set absolute limits on the benefits that a person could receive in a lifetime. States must withdraw benefits from adults who do not start work within two years. Federal cash cannot be paid to families headed by someone on benefits for five years or more.

The move was driven partly by economic concerns. As the non-partisan Congressional Research Service notes (see chart), Federal Government spending on means-tested benefits has risen for three decades. The cuts represented by last year's legislation have only partly slowed the increase because of the swelling cost of medical care for the poor. But the political moves were driven by a change in public attitudes. It has become common for women with



children to work, while Americans have become less tolerant of single mothers who rely on welfare to raise their children. And whereas many welfare programmes were originally targeted at widows and their children, they now support unmarried mothers, who enjoy far less public sympathy.

But will the dozens of different experiments underway across the US work? The definition of success is itself open to debate. To many conservatives, the reforms are justified simply if they cut federal and state spending. To liberals and some moderates, they are successful only if they also improve the long-term welfare of the poor.

Wisconsin is often lauded as the blueprint for success. Tom Thompson, the Republican Governor who campaigned

successfully in 1986 on a platform of welfare reform, blames "classic liberal mistakes" for the leap in its welfare rolls in the early 1980s. People would move to Wisconsin from other states to sign on for its generous benefits, he says, while billboards on the border with Illinois read "Will the last business to leave Wisconsin please turn out the lights".

Under Mr Thompson's schemes, which began years before Mr Clinton's legislation, the implications of Mr Thompson's moral crusade are being hammered home to welfare recipients, all but one of them black, all but three of them women, most with small children. "Do not put President of a bank" under desired job,"

limits an adult to a maximum of five years of benefit (in some cases only two years of support) over his or her whole life. Wisconsin makes no exceptions for mental or physical handicap; it also plans to make new mothers do some work as soon as the baby is three months old. "Welfare takes away your vision, your optimism, your ability to think of your self-worth," Mr Thompson says. "It wants to eliminate it completely."

In a linoleum-floored classroom in Milwaukee, the state capital, the implications of Mr Thompson's moral crusade are being hammered home to 18 welfare recipients, all but one of them black, all but three of them women, most with small children. "Do not put President of a bank" under desired job,"

search teacher. "Do not put 'Owner of my own shopping mall' Do not put 'airline pilot' as someone did last week." To a protest from a young black man that he had always wanted to be a pilot, she retorts: "Airline pilot is unrealistic. You have only a very short time to find a job."

Wisconsin, with excellent public schools, strong economy and falling unemployment (at 3.5 per cent), has found it easier than many other states to cut welfare rolls. But part of the reason for the rapid fall in the caseload comes from the recognition, as Mr Thompson puts it, that "you can't do it on the cheap". The state's spending on providing childcare, to overcome one of the main barriers single mothers face in going back to work, will have risen from \$12.5 million in 1987 to

1992. "We have to make it easier for them to go back to work," says Mr Thompson. "It's not just about welfare, it's about making sure that people can get into work and stay in work."

Marriott's programme is expanding from 16 to 22 cities and guarantees a job those who stay the course. Some 650 have undergone six weeks of unpaid, on-the-job training, plus classes that bolster pride and teach basic coping skills such as opening a bank account and finding a place to live. Putting a trainee through the course costs \$5,000, half of that state-funded. Marriott chooses only the best: one in four who apply are taken on. Nearly 80 per cent keep their jobs with Marriott for more than a year, well above average for hotel industry workers. The longer they stay, the

CASE STUDY

Others may be less altruistic but interest in welfare-to-work is growing. Sixty-three organisations and companies have attended a seminar to learn how Marriott does it.

Each course demands countless extra hours of nurturing by Marriott's personnel staff. They hunt down absences and drive them to class, go shopping with trainees for clothes, haggle with landlords, negotiate with case workers and even sort out family fights. Janet Tully, programme director, says that many welfare recipients are keen to work but have no idea how to operate within the system and tend to blame others for their troubles.

Ms Robinson was among 12 trainees from Washington, all homeless and black, who celebrated completion of their course at a euphoric awards ceremony. The graduates offered inspirational songs, poems and speeches. Ms Robinson moved her classmate to tears when she declared: "I'm not the woman I could have been or should be, but thank God I'm not the woman I used to be."

Another graduate, an energetic woman in a vivid orange dress, led a chant of Jesse Jackson's mantra of self-esteem: "I am Somebody". She

vowed she would never again be controlled by the man who had once kidnapped their baby. Later, reality set in: two women on the course were serial trainees, it seemed, signing on for courses but never holding down a job. The woman in the orange dress had been absent for several weeks from her job as a chambermaid, saying her daughter had chicken-pox — and raising fears that she was again being abused by her boyfriend.

Marriott draws criticism from trade union leaders for resisting attempts to unionise its workers and for not paying higher wages. In fact, Marriott's median rate of \$7.40 an hour is above the pay of nearly a third of US workers. In addition, Marriott offers stock options, classes on parenting and day care.

IAN BRODIE

Here's to you, Ms Robinson

Charlotte Robinson had been strong out on crack for four days when she tried to buy more. The deal turned ugly. She was robbed and beaten up, losing her front teeth. When she came to, she realised she could not sink any lower. She had been addicted for ten years. She was a single mother of three, homeless and entirely dependent on a welfare handout of \$320 a month.

Today, Ms Robinson is a success story, thanks to her own determination and America's most innovative private sector welfare-to-work scheme, pioneered by Marriott International Inc.

She has a full-time job with Marriott as a chambermaid. She has stayed off drugs for a year and has moved into a flat with her infant daughter. She hopes her two other children, now with her mother, can join her. She is saving up for

appliances, her own furniture and a car. It has been a struggle for her — and for Marriott, whose task of rehabilitating welfare recipients is both daunting and rewarding. The model may be the future for companies that need low-waged workers.

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better for Marriott, but the company insists that it counts the social benefits and does not track the programme as a profit centre. The Marriott family are Mormons and J. Willard Marriott Jr., chairman and son of the founder, has said that unless companies invest in America's decaying inner cities, the poverty trap will remain in place.

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Sole searching

LIAM STRONG was putting on a brave face yesterday, despite having to give his many critics the satisfaction of seeing him finally thrown in the tow. After parting company with Sears he plans to go sailing for the summer.

He will then consider the "range of options" he says he has open to him. "I am probably not going to go into another shoe business," Strong said, with admirable pre-sence.



"I never thought I'd say it but I'd love to be in his shoes"

Hands' length

NOMURA BANK director Michael Cooke was faced with an embarrassing situation on Monday when he turned up for a meeting of the lending group to the Co-operative Retail Society. CRS may be at daggers drawn with the Co-operative Wholesale Society, but Cooke was at pains to distance himself from Guy Hands, the corporate financier at Nomura International, who was helping Andrew Regan put together the finance for the abortive bid for the CWS.

Neil Pringle, the CRS's urbane financial controller, accepted the apology with equanimity. The bank said it had not talked to the corporate finance side. There are Japanese walls apparently."

Tiger chasing

JIM MELLON, the stroker of Hambros Bank, is no stranger to risk. The



globe-trotting head of Regent Pacific, the Hong Kong-based fund manager, cut his teeth in the emerging Tiger markets of South-East Asia under the auspices of Richard Thornton's eponymous group. He was there when the 1987 crash wreaked havoc in the region. Now he's back with his own company and thriving in the new Tiger economies of Eastern Europe as well as holding a near 4 per cent stake in Hambros Bank. The Regent portfolio is not for the faint-hearted — so nice to see such august bodies as the President and Fellows of Harvard College and our own Equitable Life backing him.

A READER calls to point out that the cultural departments of the US

and Russian embassies can only be called on premium-rate phone lines. Who knows what great insights you can get at 45p per minute?

Riding high

THE latest IRA campaign has halted planes, trains and automobiles but not determined executives. Rupert Lowe and Andrew Cowen, chairman and managing director of Southampton Leisure, got stuck in an impossible traffic jam on the M3 yesterday caused by the latest round of bomb threats. Fortunately, they were able to turn back to Mr Cowen's house and beat the traffic by both riding to their meeting at the Dell, home of Southampton Football Club, on Mr Cowen's pride and joy — a BMW 1.000cc motorcycle.

A SPOT OF wishful thinking from the fax machines at Tory Central Office? A press release winging its way from Conservative HQ was mysteriously dated 1992. Nostalgic memories of the last election victory must be permeating the air.

Reading rescue

ALAN LEWIS is clearly enjoying himself as receiver of AFC Bournemouth, the second division football club. The Arthur Andersen partner, a veteran of the Godiva Walker, Coal Investments and Maxwell insolvencies, has done

everything but play in goal in his attempts to save The Cherries.

He offered to compete in a penalty shoot-out against Trevor Watkins, the lawyer from Hammond Sudards who runs the Bournemouth Trust Fund, and a representative of the supporters' club, to raise money for the club. But a downpour washed out the competition last weekend.

Now Reading, where multimillionaire publisher John Madejski is about to build a £37 million "Madejski" stadium, is coming to the rescue. It is playing a charity game against Bournemouth a week today at the end of which the shoot-out will reconvene. Weather permitting.

A portrait of John Madejski, the man who will see his team come to the rescue of a rival



A golden rule that might make sense

Dean Trench Street, one of the modest canonical roads leading to Smith Square in Westminster, is not the sort of place you would look for a bomb factory. But it is the home of the National Institute for Economic and Social Research, and the latest NIESR quarterly review, contains one table with a potential explosive force. It is called the public sector balance sheet. It explains why our taxes are still too low, despite 22 increases. It blows apart a lot of hallowed icons: the Maastricht criteria, our own medium-term financial strategy, and Gordon Brown's golden rule. Not to mention any Conservative pretensions to good stewardship.

However, critics charge that Wisconsin has not addressed the bald fact that some people are incapable of steady work. Social workers in Milwaukee say the programme is poorly equipped to deal with those who are highly antisocial or disruptive, if not actually mentally ill. A study by the University of Wisconsin, which called the reforms "a leap into the unknown", said the long-term effects of leaving so many children in state-run childcare could be worrying.

From his own 12-year study of single mothers, Mr Burdett says that for a minority — he estimates a quarter — strict time limits "would probably mean that they could no longer support their children at all" and "could cause highly visible hardship and even homelessness". He concludes: "Unfortunately, the earnings capacity of most women who collect welfare is limited. Any humane and effective reform plan must take this unpleasant fact into account."

Those criticisms are rejected by Wisconsin's Governor, who is adamant about sticking to his principle that everyone is capable of work. But although those charges cannot be properly assessed for several years, they do at least delineate the formidable gamble that ambitious welfare reform programmes are taking.

It is, first of all, a gamble on the economy: that growth will continue, and that the private sector will continue to need unskilled workers. Recession could make an immediate and painful dent in the project, shaking out people who had been shoe-horned into minimum-wage jobs during prosperity. Second, it is a gamble on changing human behaviour in the long-term: that strict time limits will deter young girls from having families, and encourage them to acquire skills instead.

The risk of bringing about welfare changes is that the poorest and least capable may suffer extreme hardship. That price will not be clear until the guillotine of time limits has finally cut off benefits from long-term recipients. The problem that may then confront politicians is whether voters, however pleased at the shrinking welfare rolls, will want to see the painful consequences of that social reform on their streets.

IAN BRODIE

Co should the next government simply tear up the existing rule book? Ideally, yes, but the shock effect would be too great. A more modest hope is that the Treasury and the next Chancellor will read the Review, and that the next Red Book contains at least a mention of the public sector balance sheet.

British companies are said to be too much dominated by accountants. Could they export some to our biggest financial concern?

The Canon MultiPASS™ can print, can fax, can copy, can scan.

The new MultiPASS™ C30

and MultiPASS™ 10 from

Canon. They'll meet your

every business require-

ment. Compact, and so

Irish boom economy expected to continue

FROM EILEEN McCABE IN DUBLIN

THE Republic of Ireland's booming economy is set to continue to outstrip its European neighbours until 2005, the country's leading economic think-tank has said.

In a report published today the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) predicts GNP growth of 5.5 per cent for the remainder of the 1990s, slowing to 5 per cent through to 2005.

The independent group says that such growth will fuel a sharp fall in unemployment from its current rate of around 11 per cent to just 7 per cent by 2005 and that Ireland will achieve the EU average standard of living within the next eight years. The authors conclude: "The long-standing critique of Ireland as a small vulnerable economy on the periphery of Europe is already looking a little threadbare."

The Medium Term Review says the cornerstone of Ireland's economic success was

laid in the late 1960s when the Government introduced free secondary level education — a full 20 years after most other European countries. However, unlike some, Ireland continued to make education a priority. Today, almost 50 per cent of those leaving the education system do so after tertiary training. More than 80 per cent stay in schools at least until Leaving Certificate (A levels) standard, giving a higher rate of participation in education than in Britain.

The authors say these developments have interacted with and influenced such fundamental areas as the skill levels of the workforce, female participation in the labour market and emigration.

The latter area has shown the most dramatic improvement. Back in 1950 almost one-third of the country's potential labour market entrants emigrated in search of employment. Today the exceptional performance of the economy has resulted in net immigration. This in turn is set to cut the dependence/workers ratio from one of the highest in Europe in the Eighties to one of the lowest by 2005.

The ESRI cites tight fiscal controls, moderate pay demands and national wage agreements as key instruments of growth. It says that more of the same is required in the next decade if growth is to be sustained.

The biggest danger is that an excessive rise in expectation could feed into wage inflation or on supportable demands on the Exchequer," says the report. However, it should be possible, says the report, to eliminate new government borrowing in the next three years and to run a small surplus by 2005.

The predictions are based on the presumption that EMU will go ahead on January 1, 1999, and that the Republic will be a founding member.



Patrick Coyle, left, chief executive, and Conor McCarthy, retiring chairman and chief executive, yesterday

Ryan races ahead after revamp

A MULTIMILLION-POUND refurbishment programme last year helped to boost profits 45 per cent at Ryan Hotels, one of the Republic of Ireland's leading chains (Eileen McCabe writes). The group, which has hotels throughout Ireland and three outlets on the Conti-

nent, yesterday reported pre-tax profits of £4.04 million. Earnings grew 43 per cent to £5.25p a share. Over the past four years, Ryan has spent £18 million updating many of its leading hotels in Ireland. Yesterday, it announced a 100-bedroom extension to the Gresham

Hotel, the group's Dublin flagship. It also said that, as expected, Conor McCarthy would be stepping down as chief executive, but would remain as non-executive chairman. There is a final dividend of 10.25p, payable on August 7, giving a total of £1.87p (£1.5p).

Watmoughs shares tumble after second profit warning

BY MARTIN BARROW

SHARES in Watmoughs (Holdings) fell 24.3 per cent after the printing group issued its second profit warning in just six weeks. Patrick Walker, chairman, told the company's annual meeting that underlying profits in the first half would fall short of last year's interim profits.

He said the difficult trading conditions in Britain in the final quarter of last year had continued in the first three months of the current year, although there is now evidence that the market for high-quality web offset is improving. UK gravure operations are

suffering from the strength of the pound, which is affecting exports and the non-contractual gravure business, which competes in a European market. This is being compounded by the price of paper being cheaper in continental Europe than in Britain. Markets for financial printing and packing remain very competitive, the company said.

Operations in Spain and Hungary are progressing in line with expectations in local currency terms, although these are suffering on translation into sterling. The disclosure that first-half

profits would fall below last year's comparable £9.6 million stunned the stock market, and the shares fell 87.5p to 272.5p, wiping more than £58 million from the company's market value, to £188.7 million.

A year ago the shares traded at 480p. In March they fell 28p to 407p after the company reported a fall in pre-tax profits to £2.22 million (£23.7 million). Analysts believe current-year profits are unlikely to exceed £26 million and pressure is growing on Declan Sather, chief executive, to reassure investors that the company can recover.

The industry group said compact disc sales grew by 9 per cent, while both cassette and vinyl LP sales fell by 1 per cent and 32 per cent respectively. But the singles market experienced continued growth with an 8 per cent increase in sales.

Latin America was the fastest growing region, with total sales up by almost 30 per cent. Brazil ended the year as the sixth largest music market in the world, showing an increase of sales of 33 per cent. Growth in Columbia exceeded 30 per cent despite prolonged economic problems. The IFPI said at a seminar held during London's Music Week.

"In 1996, around 70 per cent of the world's music growth was generated in less developed markets, in particular from Latin America and Asia. This compared with only 20 per cent in 1993, when global growth was at a similar level to 1996," the industry body said.

In Asia, growth of 9 per cent was at its highest for some years. Malaysia, Taiwan and Thailand all had sales growth of more than 20 per cent. Europe retained its position as the largest region for music sales, with 34 per cent of world total, the IFPI said.

Kuoni also cautioned that alongside uncertainty factors to currencies and securities markets, as well as short-term bookings, it has 50 percent of its fixed costs in the first half, but realises only 10 to 20 per cent of its operating earnings in that period.

The majority of operating results are seen in the summer and autumn vacation period, which falls in the second half.

Cashless society faces another test

BY SARA McCONNELL

THE Republic of Ireland will get its first taste of the cashless society next year, when National Bank of Ireland and Ulster Bank launch a series of pilots to test the Mondex smartcard. Shoppers, users of public transport and others will be able to use the cards directly as an "electronic wallet" for small transactions, instead of using cash. The card can be loaded with cash and debited for goods or services at point of sale.

The two Irish banks will form a joint venture company to exploit the Mondex franchise and develop the necessary infrastructure. Similar franchises exist in the US, Canada, New Zealand and Hong Kong, under the umbrella of Mondex International. 51 per cent owned by Mastercard International. The first pilot in Swindon,

Latins lead in \$40bn market for music

BY A CORRESPONDENT

THE overall volume of global music sales grew by 4 per cent last year, totalling four billion units worth \$30.8 billion, the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) said yesterday. The fastest growing region of the world was Latin America.

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In Britain, sales grew by 7 per cent. Among medium-sized markets, Denmark and Portugal both showed growth in sales of more than 15 per cent. In eastern Europe, sales grew by 14 per cent overall, with CD sales increasing by almost 30 per cent and cassette sales up by more than 10 per cent.

Keegan: Swindon project

By SARA McCONNELL

Wiltshire, involving 13,000 users, is set to finish in July after two years. Mondex, headed by Mike Keegan, denied that the project had been slow to catch on and said the main aim of the pilot had been to test the equipment. Mondex cards are in use at Exeter and York Universities.

BURFORD HOLDINGS

BURFORD HOLDINGS has agreed to acquire four retail warehouse parks from Morrison Construction Group for £65.5 million. Burford said the parks in Edinburgh, Stoke-on-Trent, Hull and Walsall comprise approximately 450,000 sq ft of lettable retail warehouse accommodation. Only Meadowbank in Edinburgh, comprising 135,000 sq ft, has been developed so far, while planning consent has been granted for development of the three other sites. Construction is expected to proceed shortly.

The company said it will be making stage payments as predetermined lettings are achieved. Overall, the price reflects an average yield of 7.8 per cent, based on an average rent of £11.30 per sq ft. John Anderson, property director at Burford Holdings, said: "This deal provides us with an excellent yield off a low average base rent and will provide good returns for Burford shareholders in the short to medium term."

Tate & Lyle investment

TATE & LYLE, the UK sugar company, has invested £4.1 million from its existing cash resources for a 50 per cent stake in a new sugar plant in India. Tate & Lyle's partner in this venture is Simbhaoli Sugar Mills. The plant at Chitwaria, about 300 miles east of Delhi, began production in February. The factory has been designed for easy and low-cost expansion in the medium term to 120,000 tonnes of sugar a year and an eventual capacity of more than 300,000 tonnes a year.

Zeneca collaboration

ZENECA GROUP, the pharmaceuticals company, announced a research collaboration agreement with Oxford University aimed at identifying genes responsible for ischaemic heart disease, caused by an inadequate supply of blood. The company said it will provide financial support to the university in return for clear options on the exploitation of drug development following the discovery of genetic targets during the collaboration.

Hornby back on track

SHARES of Hornby rose 8p to 244.1p yesterday after the toys and models company said it expected pre-tax profits for the year to March 31 to be no less than £2.5 million, ahead of City expectations, with earnings of 30p a share. The company incurred a pre-tax loss of £5.6 million in the previous 12 months. Hornby said trading over Christmas met expectations after a slow start. Sales in the first three months of 1997 matched those in the same period last year.

Polypipe to buy Celmac

POLYPIPE, the building products company, has agreed to buy a manufacturer of plastic toilet seats for a maximum consideration of £10.9 million. Celmac, based near Manchester, recorded pre-tax profits of £1.6 million in 1996. Its net assets were £2.2 million at the year end. An initial £1.5 million will be paid in shares, with £400,000 payable in cash six months after completion. Polypipe is raising a further £4.9 million through a share issue to repay recent borrowings.

NIE in joint venture

NORTHERN IRELAND ELECTRICITY and United Utilities have set up a joint venture to take over NIE's training, data management and meter reading. Vertex Ireland, an operation between United Utilities' facilities division and NIE's equivalent business, will seek further work in payroll, administration, pensions organisation and accounting. Four hundred NIE staff will transfer to Vertex, which will work from Belfast and Dublin and aim for a £100 million turnover within five years.

Portman 'stays a society'

PORTMAN BUILDING SOCIETY is committed to remaining in its present form and not converting to a bank. Members were told yesterday. Addressing the annual meeting, Douglas Baker, chairman, said the society, which is based in Bournemouth, had reviewed its strategy for the future. "Our position is clear," he said. "We intend to remain a building society because we believe that this best serves the interests of both existing and future members."

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■ FILM

Johnny Depp, brightest of the brat-pack stars, prepares to deromanticise the Mafia



■ CHOICE 1

Glen Tetley creates a new work for six of the Royal Ballet's leading dancers

VENUE: Tonight at the Royal Opera House



■ CHOICE 2

Penelope Keith returns to the stage in *Mrs Warren's Profession*

VENUE: Opens tonight in Guildford, before touring



■ CHOICE 3

Peter Whelan's new play, *Overture*, opens tonight in Stoke-on-Trent

VENUE: At the New Victoria Theatre

Hollywood just can't get a grip on Johnny Depp, the anti-star star. Martyn Palmer reports

Outsider on the A-list

By now Johnny Depp could, if he so desired, have turned himself into the conventional movie idol that so many in Hollywood want him to be. He could, for instance, have taken the lead in the huge box office success *Speed*, which made Keanu Reeves a star. Depp turned it down, as he rejected *Legends of the Fall* and *Interview With The Vampire*, major vehicles for Brad Pitt and Tom Cruise.

Instead, the 33-year-old Depp has chosen his own path, preferring to devote his time to films often described as "quirky", usually well-received by the critics, displaying a formidable talent that has drawn accolades from actors of the stature of Marlon Brando and Al Pacino.

Depp's movies may have been slightly leftfield — such as *Cry Baby*, *Edward Scissorhands*, *What's Eating Gilbert Grape?* and *Ed Wood* — but they have never been anything less than interesting. And, if Depp is regarded as A-list in Tinseltown, then it's almost in spite of himself.

So, when the British director Mike Newell was casting for *Donnie Brasco*, the true story of an undercover FBI agent who infiltrated the mob for six years, he knew that Depp was the man to place alongside Pacino.

"Why did I choose Johnny and not someone like Keanu? Well, I wanted someone who could act, for a start," Newell says. "And Johnny is a very, very clever actor, make no mistake about that."

When you point this out to Depp, and add the fact that both Brando and Pacino have called him the best actor of his generation, he positively squirms with embarrassment. "I don't know why people like that say those things, but I mean, obviously, that's great," he shuffles. "I'm lucky to be able to say that they are friends of mine, but they are heroes too, you know? I have nothing but respect for them."

A lesser actor could have been chewed up and spat out by Pacino, but in *Donnie Brasco* it is a bit like watching the Method King passing his blessings to his heir apparent. "Working with Al was everything and a whole lot more than I expected," Depp says.

"It was a real treat and an honour. I learnt as much as I could but it's difficult to pick out specifics. I expected him to be very serious and not very loose and playful, but he wasn't like that at all. He was constantly making jokes and making people laugh."

The film's central relation-



Johnny Depp in his new film, *Donnie Brasco*, as the real-life FBI agent who went underground against the mob

ship is between Joe Pistone, the real-life undercover FBI agent who adopted the identity of *Donnie Brasco*, a small-time Florida jewel thief, and Lefty Ruggiero (Pacino), the lowly, embittered Mafia man who unwittingly vouches for him so that he gains access to the mob world.

Before starting filming, Depp spent months in preparation with Pistone, now 58 and retired from the FBI. Depp, Pistone says, was hardly what he expected. "All I knew about Johnny was what I'd read in the papers," he says. "You know, about him trashing hotel rooms and stuff. But we spent a lot of time together; we worked out together in the gym. I took him to the FBI academy in Virginia, and he wanted to know everything."

"He would even ring up my wife and ask questions. He kept saying, 'I want to make this right for you, you have to live with this film for the rest of your life and I want to do it justice'. And he did. He captured me to a T."

"He wouldn't even go to see a screening until I could go with him. Most actors wouldn't care, they would just

take the money and run. He's a lovely guy."

In the film Pistone makes a close friend of Ruggiero, a man Pistone knows he must ultimately betray. "I spoke about that with Joe," says Depp. "He said that there is no way you can hang around with someone for six years solid and not feel something for them. On the one hand you can have them and despise them, but on the other you sort of love the guy."

"But it's wrong to say that Joe was betraying them. If he had been a Mafia guy from the beginning and then turned on his friends and associates that would have been a betrayal. But the fact is that Joe came in as an FBI agent and he was just doing his job."

"He made an enormous sacrifice. He missed his children growing up, he faced the daily threat to his life, and he had to move his family constantly to protect them. He is maybe the strongest person I ever met in my life."

Donnie Brasco is, on the surface at least, Depp's most mainstream film since he crossed over from television — where he played a cop in the hit *21 Jump Street* — almost ten years ago. But it would be wrong to assume that he is now about to start accepting some of those blockbuster scripts that drop, unsolicited, on the doormat of the \$3 million mansion he recently bought in the Hollywood Hills.

Instead, he is back in the editing suite finishing *The Brave*, a film he co-wrote, directed and stars in alongside Brando. A dark, brooding story of a young man involved in a snuff movie, *The Brave* is hardly going to be mainstream.

"I was, still am, a musician. This other stuff just happened

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The Brave was the most

difficult thing I've ever done and I was an idiot to attempt it. It's way too much work for one person. You get up before bed later than anybody else and you go to bed later than anybody and when you are asleep you are dreaming about it. I don't know that I'll ever catch up on the sleep I lost."

Born in Kentucky, the youngest of three children, Depp moved to Los Angeles in his teens with the hope of carving out a career in music, his first love, and he started acting to pay the bills. Then came *21 Jump Street*, and he was suddenly splashed across the covers of teen magazines all over the world.

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The Brave</



THEATRE 1

All of life is here? Rising playwright Joe Penhall takes society's misfits as his subject



THEATRE 2

At the Tricycle *The Mai* proves to be a dour Irish drama about a family in turmoil



RISING STAR

Director, actor, composer: is there no area in which Neil Rutherford can't excel?



TOMORROW

How does Helena Bonham Carter measure up in her latest role? Read Geoff Brown on the new films

THEATRE: Why one of our best new playwrights is now writing about morality rather than murder. Plus review

Barking up a family tree

Marina Carr's *Portia Coughlan*, which came last year from Dublin to the Royal Court, pulled us deep into the mind of a violent depressive, incestuously obsessed with her dead brother, in the process providing a marvellous role for Derbile Croft. Carr's *The Mai* draws us into the family whose tree is helpfully published in the programme, and, though it has its sharp moments, the result is more spread out and less intense. After all, trees are trees, and it can be hard to see the trunk for the leaves.

Mainly, the emphasis is on Mai, or the Mai as she is called. The play opens as her husband, Robert, returns to her lake-house in central Ireland from a long, unexplained absence in America; when it ends, he is having an affair with a local woman. The problem is, Mai loves him and cannot bring herself to reject him. One of the play's points is that people find themselves deciding whether to put their spouses or their children first and, when they opt too strongly for the former, emotional disaster may ensue.

The point is reinforced by the arrival of Myra Carter's Grandma Fraochlan, a 100-year-old exotic whose manners and taste for opium are unburnt by time. She still mythologises her fisherman husband, and is still resented by her unloved, unlovable 75-year-old daughter.

The troubles extend to the next generation, mainly represented by Judith Scott's Mai, and even to the next. By the close Mai's daughter, Millie, has acquired an illegitimate son — and what, given his author's mistrust of families, will his fate be?

I'm not revealing vital secrets. For one thing, *The Mai* does not generate great



Myra Carter as 100-year-old Grandma Fraochlan in *The Mai*

Grandma has a nice line in hoarse, farmyard squawks, and Angela Crow, playing the most damaged of her brood, an equally good one in wintry looks and frosty remarks.

Scott's Mai does not get the chances Derbile Croft had last year, but she bestirs her emotional stumps for a big, angry run-in with Robert Gwilym, playing her somewhat underwritten husband. For that scene, at least, you believe families are as destructive as Marina Carr suggests.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

Wild cards may be sexier, but Joe Penhall's latest play is about hard workers. Jeremy Kingston met him

Joe Penhall's first play, called *Wild Turkey* and set in a pizza bar, was shown in 1993 at the New Play Festival at the Old Red Lion. A year later *Some Voices*, where the schizophrenic hero starts to see horrors while cooking an omelette, was staged at the Theatre Upstairs and lauded for just about everything: emotional truth, balanced treatment of combatants, razor-sharp, eloquent writing.

Then came *Pale Horse*, where the action was divided between a gangsterish South London club and Balham Common, where the club-owner found himself having to bury a murdered rival. Praised for its ability to create moods of rage and grief, the play came unstuck in the second half and was seen as an intriguing stage in Penhall's journey as a writer. His next play, the critics said, would be eagerly awaited, and here it is: *Love and Understanding*, starting preview today at the Bush Theatre.

Half the characters in *Some Voices* were finding difficulty adjusting to what the rest of society considered proper human behaviour. In *Pale Horse* a wild girl beats a customer to death with a baseball bat. So does *Love and Understanding* come from the same mould of violence and fear?

"My plays always seem to revolve around two characters, one a straight man and one the misfit," Penhall says. "In this play the misfit is Richie, who's left his job and gone off travelling. He gets lost in South America, and comes back with a taste for morphine to turn up on a schoolfriend's doorstep.

"This schoolfriend is now a doctor, very harassed, trying desperately to cling to his ideals, overworked, underpaid. Whereas Richie is very flippant and cynical and modern about everything. All he wants is to insinuate himself into his friend's house, take his money, seduce his girlfriend and get hold of drugs.

● *Love and Understanding* preview from tonight at the Bush Theatre (0181-743 3383)

GREAT BRITISH HOPES

Rising stars in the arts firmament: NEIL RUTHERFORD

Profession: Actor/composer/director. Born in Manchester, raised in Letchworth, Herts.

Age: 27.

Latest credits: Currently to be seen in the touring production of *Salad Days*; he also directed the Mercury Workshop's recent, highly praised revue *Late & Lyrical*, presented at the Jermyn Street Theatre. He will be on the big screen shortly, playing alongside Zoe Wanamaker in director Beeban Kidron's new film, *Amy Foster*. A ballet commission and a musical are in the works, too.

He wears many hats, then: "I don't like being categorised. I like being able to swap and choose between directing, performing and composing. I enjoy all three, and as long as I can juggle them, it's great."

What was his earliest stage experience? "I was hopping around inside my mother when she was pregnant and playing one of the nuns in an amateur production of *The Sound of Music*." He made a more conventional sort of debut in a staging of *Carmen*.



was a challenge to have little more than a box and a tree to work with as a set. I was still involved with it when the *Salad Days* tour started: directing by telephone is fun."

What about the new show-in-progress? *A Life To Come* is based on short stories by E.M. Forster. "My original aim was to write a musical version of *Maurice*, but it was too difficult to get the rights. There's a gay element to the show, but I'm really attracted to the romanticism of the Edwardian era."

But can the young writer show off in *Late & Lyrical*? "Yes, but it's going to take time, because the vast majority of coach parties want to see the blockbusters. I do recognise that the big wows are the audience-pullers — the West End musical has never been so popular.

Yet I can foresee the emergence of studio-type shows modelled on composers like Sondheim. I just wish that producers would see that too: most of them just don't want to take risks. I am optimistic, though."

CLIVE DAVIS

A rose in her own right

WHO needs an all-dancing all-singing West End spectacular when you can have Amanda McBroom instead? She must be weary of being described as the woman who wrote *The Rose* for Bette Midler, since she has plenty of other credits to her name. Brash yet sophisticated, she has devised a quite unmissable entertainment, bravely placing the emphasis on her own compositions.

CABARET

Amanda McBroom
Pizza on the Park

Like all skillful cabaret singers McBroom brings conversational intimacy to a lyric, yet she is also capable of abrupt shifts into a purer, operetta-like register.

Some of her finest songs — *Dance, Ship in a Bottle* — unfold beautifully observed studies in disillusionment. Her training as an actress allows her to attack lyrics with an intensity which might otherwise be unbearably melodramatic. On her new album, *A Waiting Heart*, the lush orchestral arrangements can prove a distraction, but in concert Joel Silberman's cultured piano-playing formed the ideal foil, prodding her

ever onwards. The countryfied waltz *Errol Flynn*, offered McBroom's touching memories of her own father, David Bruce, a film actor destined always to be a supporting player. A superb medley flowed from the wide-eyed romance of the standard *Teach Me Tonight* — adorned with playful doo-wop style piano triplets — to the brutal dissolving of wordy goods on *You Can Have The TV*. But it was not wall-to-wall melancholia — McBroom's self-deprecating wit always shone through.

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■ DESIGN

Gardens in the sky: Norman Foster's new Frankfurt tower puts the wow into office life



■ MUSIC 1

Matthias Bamert resuscitates a miniature masterpiece by Berthold Goldschmidt



■ MUSIC 2

...while London hears Sir Peter Maxwell Davies's jaunty new Piccolo Concerto



■ VISUAL ART

Birds of a feather: Edinburgh enjoys an exhibition of remarkable miniatures

IAN LAMBOT

Opposites attract

CONCERTS

RPO/Maxwell Davies Barbican

Sibelius's method of achieving thematic unity out of fragments is nearly the reverse of a favourite Davies compositional process: but another composer, of whatever hue, is likely to bring insights to the interpretation of a work as tightly constructed as Sibelius's Seventh.

Davies's reading was most convincing in its realisation of the shape of the whole. It was less satisfying in its evocation of atmosphere. Sibelius's textures are so detailed that decisions have constantly to be made about what is to be foreground and what background. There were times here when too much was jostling for attention.

Davies as composer was represented by a new work: a piccolo concerto receiving its London premiere, and skilfully played by Stewart McIwham. The piccolo may have obvious limitations as a

solo instrument, but Davies is not one to shirk a challenge.

What he does is to play with the stereotypical modes of the instrument, so that the military "pipe and drum" effect is hinted at near the beginning of the third movement, while the jaunty manner is recalled at the close of the first, but as through a veil.

A potentially comic partnership with the bass clarinet is also dignified when the two instruments engage in meditative dialogue in the second movement. The bass clarinet is better equipped for this mode than the piccolo, but finally even Davies's ingenuity — and McIwham's versatility — is exhausted.

More predictable but not lacking in passion or warmth was the account of Max Bruch's Violin Concerto No 1 in G minor, with Tasmin Little the soloist.

BARRY MILLINGTON

Young at heart

SCO/Bamert Edinburgh

THE difference between Berthold Goldschmidt's Violin Concerto and his *Rondeau*, which also features a solo violin, is not just the 40 years that elapsed between them. It is a matter of inspiration. Apart from a weak third movement, the concerto, in its revised version, is an accomplished and attractive work. The *Rondeau*, which was written for Chantal Juillet after Goldschmidt had heard her perform the concerto in 1994, is a little masterpiece.

It is encouraging to think of a composer in his nineties so moved by the playing of a young violinist — and, one imagines, her personality — that he could produce something as fresh as the *Rondeau*. Cryptographically, it derives its main theme from the musical letters in its subtitle, *Rue du Rocher*, the street in Paris where Goldschmidt first thought of the piece over a meal with Juliet and Charles Dutoit. Essentially, it is about the sound and style of playing that inspired the piece, with its particularly eloquent passages of double-stopping and its happy vivacity.

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VISUAL ART: John Russell Taylor admires treasures from Japan and Italy

A big hand for the little people



The lacquered lid of a writing box made c 1860-70 by the influential 19th-century Japanese artist, Shitaoza Zeshin

If you believe that small is beautiful, Edinburgh has the ideal shows for you. The more spectacular is that devoted to the 19th-century Japanese artist, Shitaoza Zeshin, at the Royal Museum of Scotland. Zeshin is not a household name in the way that Hokusai or Utamaro are, for a very good reason: while they worked in colour wood-blocks which were easily disseminated throughout the world, he is a master — perhaps the supreme master — of lacquer. Moreover, he was very famous in his own lifetime (1807-1891), and most of his work has stayed in Japan, despite the eagerness of Western connoisseurs.

Or had, until Dr Nasser Khalili came on the scene. Dr Khalili is a collector of unique determination, as those who saw a tawt of his Ottoman collection at the Brunei Gallery last year will remember.

The result in this case is an assembly of about 70 pieces in a display hitherto untrivaled, even in Japan. Most of the pieces are small — no larger than can be held in the hand — although there are also some more ambitiously scaled trays and wall-plaques, as well as a screen and a handful of works on paper.

tonishing themselves to make writing-boxes, purses, *sake* cups, fans and scrolls. Usually the colours are subdued; occasionally they flare up, as in the tray with a brilliant red teapot on it.

Presumably Zeshin's many patrons wanted his work for their own personal pleasure. Cassiano dal Pozzo had something more far-reaching in view. He was an early 17th-century Roman collector and connoisseur. One of Poussin's most important patrons and a

friend of Galileo, he was not hesitant in embarking on a vast project in his Museo Cartaceo, or Paper Museum. He wanted to cover graphically as much as possible of the world's assembled wisdom, and since he was not able to buy all the antiquities he needed for his scheme, he set a group of mostly young artists (some of whom, such as Pietro da Cortona, went on to later fame) to document in drawings everything worth knowing in the ancient and modern worlds.

Many of the original 7,000 drawings have found their way into the Royal Collection at Windsor, and from there into a weird and wonderful loan show at the National Gallery of Scotland. The technique is usually miniaturist, even if the drawings themselves are large. Cassiano's enterprise may be odd, but you can't help admiring his sense of purpose. And some absolutely exquisite drawings result.

• Shitaoza Zeshin is at the Royal Museum of Scotland, Chambers St, Edinburgh (0131-225 7524) until Oct 1. Cassiano dal Pozzo's Paper Museum is at the National Gallery of Scotland, The Mound, Edinburgh (0131-556 8921) until June 8.

Instead the planners insisted that at street level Foster built out to the old building line. Now there is a generous glass-roofed plaza open to the public; it contains a restaurant where works of art will be on show from local museums. An imaginative solution, in keeping with the whole project. Ten years ago I swore I would never work in a high-rise block again. Foster might just change my mind.

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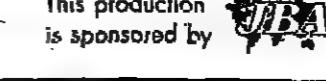
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LOVE & STATE

EC rule not apt for citizen's spouse in UK

Sahota v Secretary of State for the Home Department
Zeghraba v Same

Before Lord Justice Stuart-Smith, Lord Justice Orton and Lord Justice Judge

Judgment April 23

A person who was not a citizen of a member state of the European Community but was married to a British citizen, was not entitled under Community law to the same rights of residence in the United Kingdom as those enjoyed by his spouse under UK law when they returned to live and work in the United Kingdom.

The rights under Community law were not to be elided or amalgamated with those which arose under domestic law within the territory of member states for their own nationals and spouses. National law continued to distinguish between British citizens with a right of abode and citizens of the Community exercising Community rights.

The Court of Appeal so held, allowing an appeal by the Secretary of State for the Home Department against a decision of the Immigration Appeal Tribunal dated May 8, 1996 that Sarabjit Singh Sahota was entitled to indefinite leave to remain in the UK and, dismissing an appeal by Mohammed Zeghraba against the dismissal by the Immigration Appeal Tribunal dated June 7, 1996 of his appeal against the Home Secretary's refusal of indefinite leave to remain in the UK.

Article 4 of Council Directive of October 15, 1986 on the abolition of restrictions on movement and residence within the Community for workers of member states and their families (68/360/EEC) (OJ Special English Edition 1988 (II) p48) as last amended by Dec 95/EEC (OJ 1995 L11) provides:

Employer liable for failing to check drivers' records

Wing v Nuttal
Before Lord Justice McCowan and Mr Justice Popplewell

Judgment April 15

An employer who failed to make checks on the tachograph chart in order to confirm that drivers were complying with the relevant legal requirements was guilty of such reckless behaviour that knowledge of the contraventions would be imputed.

Because article 15 of Council Regulation EEC/3820/85 of December 20, 1985 referred to article 14 of Council Regulation EEC/3821/85 of December 20, 1985 on recording equipment in road transport (OJ 1985 L370 p6) they should be read together, thus imposing a duty on employers to check the tachograph charts from time to time for compliance.

The Queen's Bench Divisional Court as stated when allowing an appeal by case stated by the Department of Transport Vehicle Inspectorate from the acquittal by Leyland Jusitices on June 4, 1996, of the defendant, Shane Raymond Nuttal, trading as Redline Coaches, of charges under section

96(1A) of the Transport Act 1988, as inserted by section 4 of and paragraph 9(2)(a) of Schedule 4 to the European Communities Act 1972 and amended by section 2(1)(c), (e) and (f) the Road Traffic (Drivers' Ages and Hours of Work) Act 1976, and regulation 2 of the Community Drivers' Hours and Recording Requirements Regulations 1986 (No 457).

Mr Paul O'Brien for the prosecution: Mr Mark Laprell for the defendant.

MR JUSTICE POPPLEWELL said that coach drivers employed by the defendant had been driving longer hours than permitted by the regulations. They did keep records of their journeys by way of tachographs. That meant the regulations should be read together so that periodic checks on the tachograph charts were required to the employer and which would, if examined, have revealed the breaches.

However, the employer had never examined the tachographs, and the prosecution submitted that that failure was a reckless "shutting of the eyes" bordering on negligence which was sufficient to amount to implied knowledge.

The defendant had contended that article 14 of Council Regulation EEC/3821/85 did not impose a duty to examine the charts, merely

to keep them for 12 months so that they could be examined by the authorities on request.

He argued that in the absence of any evidence that breaches were occurring, there was no reason why the employer should check the tachograph charts so that failure to do so could not amount to implied knowledge acquired through reckless behaviour.

His Lordship said that article 15 of Council Regulation EEC/3820/85, which required periodic checks to ensure compliance with all the provisions referred to both EEC/3820/85, on drivers' hours, and EEC/3821/85, on tachographs. That meant the regulations should be read together so that periodic checks on the tachograph charts were required to the employer and which would, if examined, have revealed the breaches.

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Sarah Harding and family tried moving themselves, Kevin Eason hired the professionals. Either way, it's stressful

Moving from hell to heaven

I have moved home twice in the past four months, Sarah Harding writes.

The pre-election property boom meant selling the London flat, moving everything into nearby storage, and, a few months later, out of storage into a house.

MPs due to wave farewell to the constituency, beware. For us, the first move — comprising husband, brother and man with small van — was sheer hell; the second — using professional removers — pure heaven.

Though we were prepared to spend thousands on a new house, more thousands on damp treatment, yet more on plasterers and paint, we balked at the odd £500 for professional removal men. (After all, they might be cowboys.)

Yet nothing can compare with that filthy day of stair-climbing, weight-lifting and flexibility otherwise required only at county sport level. Left (more than happy) holding the baby, I witnessed the initial light-hearted badinage between the men descend into a moroseness that at the end of the day left them barely able to grunt.

It started so well. A hearty fried breakfast for three at 9am, a cursory glance at the packed boxes, a few jokes about the flights of stairs (we lived in a top flat).

But, as we were to discover, the only cowboys in this process were ourselves. We had too few men, too small a van and too much to move. Even the storage space we had booked proved too small and had to be increased. Furthermore, most of it lay still unpacked around us.

Such was our self-deception that a seemingly empty flat still contained enough stuff —

washing-up brushes, sheets, the day's newspaper, waste-paper bins — to fill another 14 plastic bags.

And it was all so heavy. We had not yet learnt that you reserve the smallest boxes for books, for example, let alone that you don't stack the china at the bottom of the suitcase.

Then there was the piano. ("Professional piano movers? Not at £150!" we said.) So doors were prised off hinges, windows flung open wide and taken out. In the event the outside fire escape was used for a support as the swinging £3,000 piano was carefully hoisted down from upstairs sitting-room window to a waiting brother, arms outstretched, in the garden.



Moving is rarely as enjoyable as in the film *Hezpoppi*, as Sarah Harding found out

HOW TO MAKE MOVING EASIER

The British Association of Removers (BAR) can provide details of member companies, some of which are listed in the Yellow Pages. The association provides a guide for those about to move. Advice includes:

- Avoid moving on a Friday. Everybody moves on a Friday which is why it is harder to move and can cost more on that day.
- Always insure for total peace of mind but remember that your insurance will not cover

items that you have packed yourself.

- If there are parking restrictions at your new house, warn the remover. A removal van needs 50ft for parking.

- Give the foreman a spare key. The van often arrives at the new home before the owner and waiting time will cost more.

- BAR at 3 Churchill Court, 58 Station Road, North Harrow HA2 7SA; tel: 081-861 3331, fax 081-861 3332.

could check what sort of objects they contained, whether they were heavy or awkwardly shaped. And, at the new house, he checked how many flights of steps it had and then worked out what size of van and what number of men he would need.

He quoted us £80.80 including VAT. We asked for a reduction, and he took £20 off for the move's scant mileage.

He also deducted the insurance (£43). It would be difficult to ascertain whether damage had occurred in storage or in transit.

Four men managed the move in four hours. By mid-

day it was all over. Box after tidy box filed into the van. All the random objects — umbrella stand, Spanish urn, shoe rack, 4ft high dried bayleaf tree (which we had awkwardly rammed into the storage and hurriedly shut the door on), were whisked away into blankets and put into new containers, to make transportation easier.

The piano, wrapped in blankets, tied in straps and rolled on a trolley, took a mere five minutes to be moved into position.

It was done with an effortlessness borne of practice and a training in lifting. No

squashed toes for these experts.

Even their humour brightened potentially black moments. "See you have woodwork, guv," they cheerfully announced brandishing a Chesterton sofa leg which had dissolved into powder while in storage. "Spreads like wildfire, you know."

For us, the only thing spreading that day was a cosy feeling of well-being. My husband monitored proceedings or, rather, floated around indicating suitable sites for boxes; I went to the gym, and my brother ensured he was nowhere to be seen.

BUYERS had been found and lost with such regularity that we had given up all hope of moving house — ever, Kevin Eason writes. After a year, we found someone who really did want to move in to our detached house in Warwickshire — but immediately. We rented a four-bedroom house in St Albans until we could find somewhere to buy. But the house was furnished, which meant putting our furniture.

To this day, Mrs Eason, who was in charge of logistics, assures me that there was a system. The only people who didn't seem to know anything about it were *me* and our cheery team of removal men, who were apparently oblivious to all instruction, their only mission to get their job over as quickly as possible.

The removal men were to

The case of the naked vendor

This was Saturday night. I had to be in the office on Monday and all I had were the tatty T-shirt, jeans and trainers I stood up in.

Wondrously, the family's only response to this crisis was to giggle, but then, they were all dressed beautifully for the restaurant that evening as I shuffled in embarrassment from one Nike-shod foot to the other.

On Sunday morning I went to Bhs, the only store open, and buying pants knockers, socks and shirts, tried desperately to put enough clothing together to make a working wardrobe until I could get to my clothes 80 miles away in Rugby.

A week later I went to the storage firm, and one of our removal men said, without a hint of irony: "Is that a new shirt? Very nice."

Katherine Bergen on properties in London for MPs

Close to the seats of power



The £2.5 million Lutyens building in Westminster

JONATHAN AITKEN lives in Lord North Street, Lord Strathclyde, chief whip in the Lords, in Cavendish Street, and both Michael Portillo and John Patten within a whisker of Westminster Cathedral. There is property, at a price, for politicians who want to live in the "Division Bell" area — traditionally eight minutes' walk from the Lobby.

Three Georgian houses within metres of Parliament Square are being renovated for sale in Old Queen Street just off Parliament Square.

Each house, for sale with Hamptons International of Pimlico (0171-823 4994), has six floors: three for reception rooms and three for bedrooms. Telephone systems with computer linking and fax facilities will also allow potential for another further ten lines in each property. Each house is £1.5 million.

The fatalistic — or realistic — MP might consider a £85,000 three-bedroom flat with a mere seven-year lease on the market with Knight

Frank (0171-629 8171). The ing room would be useful for fund-raising parties.

The more modest politician can buy a 1930s studio flat through Tuckermans (0171-222 3511), which specialises in Westminster properties. The flat in Astral House in Regency Place, is priced at £87,500.

Renting, especially in leafy Pimlico, is popular among MPs. Jackson Stops & Staff (0171-828 4050) is offering an airy, unfurnished two-bedroom maisonette in Charlwood Street for £325 a week.

SUSSEX
A rare opportunity to buy a double roundel Oast-House. 4 bed, 2 bath, 3 reception rooms, 2 fireplaces. In rural setting. Tel: 01580 220831.

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Doherty comeback puts Higgins under pressure

By PHIL YATES

KEN DOHERTY, on the receiving end of three heavy defeats at the hands of John Higgins, repaired early damage to ensure that he will enter the concluding two sessions of their quarter-final in the Embassy world championship on level terms at 4-4.

Doherty has never performed particularly well at the Crucible Theatre, or indeed against Higgins, but, by overwhelming Steve Davis 13-3 in the last 16 on Monday, he gave himself an immeasurable boost in confidence.

Yet when Higgins exploited Doherty's initial vulnerability to lead 3-0, Doherty, soundly beaten 9-3 by Higgins in the final of the 1995 German Open and the semi-finals of the United Kingdom championship this season, appeared in trouble.

This hole became deeper

when Higgins, who also whitewashed Doherty 5-0 at the 1995 International Open, occupied prime position in the fourth frame. However, he presented Doherty with a lifeline by missing a routine

of the remaining four frames and left the arena feeling far more satisfied with the outcome than his rival.

James Wattana, of Thailand, whose pre-championship form suggested that any hopes of becoming only the second overseas player to capture the title were forlorn, built a 5-3 overnight lead against John Parrott.

A clearance of 129 represented the ideal start for Parrott, but Wattana won four of five frames after trailing 2-1.

Maintaining the determination that enabled him to edge Ronnie O'Sullivan 13-12 in the previous round, Darren Morgan held a 5-3 lead over Stephen Hendry, the title-holder. With the exception of a mid-session burst, Hendry's display was lacklustre.

Morgan, having found great self-belief at the end of a season in which he has had precious little, settled down quickly with contributions of 52 and 84 to win the first two frames before an unforced error swung the momentum in favour of Hendry.

Leading 28-8 in the third, and handily placed in the reds, Morgan overextended and missed one to a corner pocket. Hendry made 97 clearance, tied the scores at 2-2 with a 47 break launched by a spectacular plant and moved 3-2 ahead by taking the fifth.

Importantly, Morgan arrested Hendry's march. He tactfully controlled the sixth and won the seventh with a break of 77 when Hendry suffered a "kick" that caused him to miss a red to the middle pocket.

Hendry failed to score in the closing frame of the morning — he had a total of only 19 points in the last three.

□ The World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association, the game's governing body, yesterday announced that the number of world ranking tournaments will be reduced from ten to eight for the 1997-98 campaign. The casualties next season will be the European Open, staged in Malta for the past two years, and the Asian Classic.

“I plan to see if our young players are good enough to replace me before deciding whether or not to play another championships,” Deng, 24, said after leading China to a 3-0 defeat of North Korea. The progress of Yang Ying, 21, and Li Ju, 22, who supported Deng's brilliant hitting and countering, may well influence that decision.

This was the Chinese women's seventh victory in 12 championships — their only failure coming in 1991, when North Korea and

South Korea united to win the event — and ensured they cleared the first of seven hurdles that stand between them and retaining all their world titles.

China's progress to defend the men's crown was also impressive, although their 3-1 semi-final win over South Korea contained a defeat for the world champion, Kong Linghui, against Yoo Nam-Kyu.

England, by beating Holland 3-2, with two wins for Cari Prean, gave themselves the chance of playing for thirteenth place in the men's event, against Italy, Katy Parker, the 12-year-old who is about to become the youngest English player to play in a world championship, makes her debut in the mixed doubles today.

TABLE TENNIS

Deng leads China to familiar triumph

By RICHARD EATON

DENG YAPING, the world and Olympic champion and one of the sport's all-time greats, could soon retire after helping China's women to the team title at the world championships in Manchester yesterday.

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EXETER

THUNDERER
2.20 KILLING TIME, 2.55 COLONEL BLAZER, 3.30 SPRING TIME, 4.00 MR CONDUCTOR, 4.30 MYSTIC HILL (narr.)
5.00 CONTRACT BRIDGE.

GOING: GOOD TO FIRM SIS

2.20 PORTMAN FIXED INTEREST BOND NOVICES

SELLING HURDLE (£2,788, 2m 20) (3 runners)

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2 PIPER CONTRACT BRIDGE 6-11-0 0 J BURGESS 97
3 PIPER COLONEL BLAZER 6-11-0 0 J BURGESS 97
4 PIPER MYSTIC HILL 6-11-0 0 J BURGESS 97
5 PIPER CONTRACT BRIDGE 6-11-0 0 J BURGESS 97
6-12 KILLING TIME, 2.55 COLONEL BLAZER, 3.30 MYSTIC HILL (narr.)
7-12 PIPER CONTRACT BRIDGE 6-11-0 0 J BURGESS 97

5-6 KILLING TIME, 2.55 COLONEL BLAZER, 3.30 MYSTIC HILL (narr.)

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CRICKET: LANCASHIRE'S LONG UNBEATEN RUN IN BENSON AND HEDGES CUP COMES TO AN END

Yorkshire turn tables on Roses rivals

By ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT

OLD TRAFFORD (Lancashire won the toss): Yorkshire (2pts) beat Lancashire by 49 runs

FOR 16 matches, stretching back to 1994, Lancashire had reigned unbeaten in the Benson and Hedges Cup. They may yet win it for a third successive year, come July at Lord's, but their proud sequence was broken yesterday when Yorkshire won a tense, low-scoring zonal match, on a stiffly slow pitch, with more in hand than had seemed likely.

If the run had to end, it was entirely appropriate that Yorkshire should be the beneficiaries, for they had come so close last June, when Lancashire snatched an epic semi-final victory at Old Trafford by one wicket and off the final ball. For too long they have suffered, submissively, in one-day Roses cricket and, whether or not this is the precursor of altered times, it was a result to make them believe in the possibility.

Lancashire, chasing only 204 in a match carried over because of the torrential rain of Monday, never managed to engage third gear and even a valiant and typically inventive 64 not out from Neil Fairbrother could not take them close. Finally, as he ran out of partners and overs simultaneously, Fairbrother failed to dominate the strike, let alone the bowling.

Just as he had done in the semi-final last season, Peter Martin strode out to win the match in a last-wicket stand. This time, though, rather than needing two from the final ball, he required 51 from five overs; predictably, it was be-yond him.

True, Lancashire were without Mike Watkinson, their captain, and Wasim Akram, their overseas player, both unfit, and lost Glen Chapple when he broke a knuckle in the field. He will require surgery in hospital today; Lancashire may require the

return of Wasim against Derbyshire.

Lancashire, of course, have escaped from corners as tight as yesterday's, and many times. In acquiring the unargued accolade as the best cup side in the country, they have needed resilience and character as much as natural talent. In this competition, especially, they have never known when they are beaten.

Perhaps there was a false sense of security about their reply, for the Yorkshire total had seemed inadequate, even allowing for the stingy qualities of the pitch and the shortfalls in the Lancashire batting. Indeed, the impression throughout an unspiced innings was that Yorkshire will miss Michael Bevan even more than they feared.

Time and again, last season, Bevan injected Yorkshire's batting with a steely conviction. He is a taciturn character, one who openly dares being beaten and his attitude did wonders for a dressing-room that probably needed some toughening up. This year they are going to have to stand alone and, on this evidence, they may not consistently be up to it.

The opening pair, past and present captains, proceeded contentedly to 69 before Martin, who had been beating the bat with outswing, drifted one back in to bowl Martyn Moxon off his pad.

In Martin's next over, David Byas wrongly identified a long-hop, top-edging his pull to mid-on, and when Peter Hartley, the putative pinch-hitter, suffered the early late of so many such experiments, Yorkshire's platform had collapsed beneath them.

There were some undistinguished shots played as the innings declined, but this was as much because of frustrations with the pitch as to early-season rustiness. McGrath, having chanced his arm through the vacant slip



Martin, the Lancashire bowler, beats Moxon's defence and knocks back the Yorkshire batsman's stumps yesterday

area more than once, was caught at short third man, and Parker and Vaughan chipped simple catches from the off to loft the ball over the wicket.

Approach. Only when Hartley, still effective after all these years, took out Gillian and Crawley in his first two overs did the poise begin to splinter.

Aterton, having stayed

around for 20 overs for 15,

mistimed a drive to cover,

Lloyd suffered a rare failure

and Byas, juggling his

bowlers with confusing speed,

allowed for no re-enchantment.

Once the fifth-wicket stand of

67 between Fairbrother and Ian Austin was broken by Chris Silverwood, who took the gold award, the rest was a

formality.

Six of their eight Benson and Hedges Cup wins last year came through batting second and there was what seemed at first to be a measured stealth about their

approach. Only when

Hartley, still effective after all

these years, took out Gillian

and Crawley in his first two

overs did the poise begin to

splinter.

The last four wickets went

down for five runs and Lancashire, who had copied Leicestershire's huddle to generate

body heat rather than bonding, left the windswept ground

gravelly and confidently.

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OLD TRAFFORD SCOREBOARD

YORKSHIRE		LANCASHIRE	
10 Byas c Atherton b Martin	32	J E R Galton c by b Hartley	15
M D Aterton c Parker b Martin	33	J P A Hartley c c Gough b Silverwood	15
M P Vaughan c Atherton b Austin	15	J P Crawley c Gough b Hartley	6
P J Hartley lbw b Yates	6	N H Farborth not out	64
A McGrath c Austin b Yates	13	G D Lloyd c Gough	6
B Parker c Lloyd b Austin	15	J D Austin c Blaikie b Silverwood	30
C Aterton c Parker b Green	16	H M Blaikie c Parker b Silverwood	6
W R Jones not out	0	G Yates b Steme	0
D Gough c Austin b Green	0	R J Green b Gough	0
C E W Silverwood c and b Martin	0	P J Martin c Harte	0
D R Stump run out	0	G Chapple not	0
Extras (2, lb 7, w 11)	20	Extras (6, s 8, nb 6)	0
Total (45.4 overs)	203	Total (45.4 overs)	184
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-89, 2-77, 3-90, 4-114, 5-143, 6-165, 7-191, 8-199, 9-203, 10-221, 11-223, 12-223, 13-223, 14-223, 15-223, 16-223, 17-223, 18-223, 19-223, 20-223		FALL OF WICKETS: 1-89, 2-112, 3-214, 4-217, 5-228, 6-228, 7-228	
BOWLING: Martin 9-2-31-3, Austin 9-2-31-3, Chapple 6-1-23-0, Yates 10-36-32, Green 10-0-45-2, Silverwood 10-0-32-0		BOWLING: Galton 3-0-22-2, Silverwood 10-22-2, White 9-1-28-0, Hartley 9-2-31-3, Steme 9-1-31-1, Gough 10-0-30-0	
Umpires: R Julian and R A White		Gold award: C E W Silverwood	

Umpires: R Julian and R A White

Rattling good way to begin the new season

Neville Cardus thought that to be paid for watching cricket at Lord's in the afternoon, and then hearing Lotte Lehmann sing Richard Strauss at Covent Garden in the evening, was nothing less than an act of providence. If so, then he repaid his good fortune several times over, and his readers were all the richer for it.

Last Wednesday it was possible, almost, to follow in Cardus's footsteps. Less than an hour after play finished at the Oval, where Somerset had batted all day against Surrey, Sir Simon Rattle walked on to the stage of the Royal Festival Hall to conduct the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra in a programme by that well-balanced middle order, J Haydn, R Strauss and Berlioz H (cap).

It was the first day proper of the cricket season, and it may turn out to be the highlight of the summer. I do not, of course, refer to Richard Henderson's batting, tenacious though it was, or to Alex Tudor's bowling, which was distinctly promising. But for one modest day and one glorious night I imagined myself to be a successor, in spirit, to Cardus. Young Rattle played shots all round the field.

He is not in fact a cricketer man though his father, Denis, who passed away last year, assuredly was. But a wealth of associations link cricket with music, from Cardus himself, who changed common perceptions on both sides of the wicket, so to speak, through to a man such as Bob Willis, fast bowler supreme and fully paid-up Wagnerian.

Sir John Barbirolli was a lover of the game, but no more than Zubin Mehta is today. (There is even a whisper that Carlos Kleiber, possibly the greatest living conductor, is a follower.)

Nigel Kennedy is a Warwickshire member: Julian Bream and Sir Neville Marriner run their own teams. Bream so seriously that when an opposing team turned up without wicket-keeping gloves he refused to lend them his own.

Keith Miller could talk on (almost) equal terms about Beethoven to Cardus and, it is said, recruited a bonfire mission home during the Second World War so that he could fly over Bonn, where the composer was born.

They overturned Sussex in 1992, Leicestershire two years ago. This modern set, with five newcomers including Wayne Larkins, formerly of Northamptonshire and Durham, and Neal Radford, in his first season represents Minor Counties.

The side batted reliably and better than Derbyshire. A virtuous bowling display from Radford on Friday, against Worcestershire, his former county, is needed to galvanise their hopes.

The two former Test players — Larkins, of Bedfordshire, and Radford, of Herefordshire — have taken a compulsory year to qualify. No "outsider" in

5000
begin
easierMICHAEL
HENDERSON

Censors barking up wrong tree in pursuit of Russell

I have always had a fellow-feeling for Jack Russell. We are both wicketkeepers. I was quite extraordinarily bad; he is still a master. We have both revelled in bating as a form of obduracy, me hilariously against such fearsome attacks as the Nicky Bird XI, he gloriously against the might of West Indies.

We both found India a life-changing experience, me to abandon these shores for Asia and take up new ethical positions. He to found a second career as a painter. And we have both fallen foul of the censors at Lord's.

Russell had a book, called, however, *Jack Russell Unleashed*. Since it is not a Panglossian apologia, since it does not view cricket as a pastoral idyll of social and economic perfection, the authorities of

the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) have taken agin it. A newspaper serialisation of this book has been arranged and the *Daily Mail* is running it. The *Mail* has not selected the mildest and merriest pages from Russell's oeuvre; that is newspapers for you.

Lord's sees this as defiance and

'He is entitled
to say the
law is an ass'

is wondering whether to come down with all kinds of wrath and punishment. Russell's initial position is that blame lies not in his defiance but in the slippiness of Lord's. He submitted his book on time, but the Lord's censors failed to return the script with itemised complaints to meet the deadline. My profession encourages an attitude of contempt for people who miss deadlines.

My brush with the Lord's censors was over my book, a biogra-

phy, third person and many different sources, called *Phil Edmonds: A Singular Man*, published back in 1986. It will not please Edmonds to know that, when the subject of the book comes up, the normal reaction is "Edmonds? Wasn't he the one with the wife?"

Indeed, Frances Edmonds, the barnstorming *Another Bloody Tour* rather eclipsed the efforts of her husband and myself, was also a loud and dazzlingly witty voice in *A Singular Man*. The manuscript was duly submitted to Lord's for vetting and it came back with a host of objections and suggested changes.

Most of these were of mind-boggling pettiness and smug small-mindedness. Schoolmasterly voices coming distantly from a forgotten world, they brought out in us the defiance and devousness of the schoolboy.

I remember only one specific

objection. Edmonds had spoken slightly of David Gower's self-conscious, table-thumping pre-match rants. Team meetings were held up for amiable ridicule. I wrote: "I call them rah-rah meetings," said Edmonds. "That, Lord's

told us, had to go. Dutifully, I changed it. Cut the word "Edmonds". Substituted the word "Frances". The childish gibe Phil and I took in this can be imagined.

If you wish to play professional cricket, you must sign a contract accepting the notion of censorship. Why? Edmonds and Russell are both grown-ups who live in a democracy. They are entitled to say that the prime minister is a fink and the law is an ass. But they cannot say "rah-rah meeting". This is plainly absurd.

It is hard to see what the ECB is seeking to achieve. For a start, its notion of censorship is deeply unEnglish. A Whig gentleman-politician would find Russell's views beneath his notice; a modern democrat would defend, even in disagreement, a cricketer's right to express his views on cricket.

So far, all Lord's has managed to do is to create a tidal wave of publicity for Russell's book. If it

seeks to go further, Russell has vowed to defend himself, on the aforementioned grounds of slippiness about deadlines. If that sticks, Lord's will look like a fool.

If it doesn't and it succeeds in banning Russell, it will look still worse. Russell is, deservedly, a player greatly loved, for his craftsmanship as a wicketkeeper, his stubbornness and improvisation as a batsman, for his unassuming air, for his various martyrdoms, for his nous in bringing out in himself a second talent. To punish Russell would bring forth a nationwide howl of dismay.

Ray Illingworth, former chairman of selectors, was fined £2,000 for bringing the game into disrepute over his own book in which he defended his outragous treatment of Devon Mal-

colm. I abhor his remarks: I defend his right to make them. And if bringing the game into disrepute is a crime, Lord's itself stands guilty of it.

Sport thrives on its free exchange of views, in bars, in stadiums, in newspaper columns. Disagreements freely aired are part of sport's life-blood. Controversy in sport is good, not bad. Lord's, with its absurd policy of censorship, stands as an enemy of sport and an enemy of freedom. It

seeks to defend only its own piffling brief authority, its own pettifogging little tyrannies.

It is more than offensive, it is plain silly. It is really the stuff of lunacy. If this case goes any further, it will prove that it is not Jack Russell but the men of Lord's who are barking.

SIMON BARNES



Midweek View

CRICKET: INEXPERIENCE COSTS DURHAM OPENING BENSON AND HEDGES CUP WIN AT TRENT BRIDGE

Boon plans route from bust to boom

Simon Wilde on the captain trying to break a losing habit in the North East

DAVID BOON is a great believer in the sporting "cycle": the theory that says winning eventually turns to losing and losing to winning. He has good reason to believe in it, having cut his teeth in struggling Tasmania and Australia sides that now prosper and having watched from close quarters England's fortunes plummet in the opposite direction.

There could scarcely be a wiser choice than Boon, then, to lift Durham out of their trough of despair. If they are indeed a team at the bottom of a cycle, the wheel of fortune to which they are fated must be a mighty big one. At Trent Bridge yesterday Nottinghamshire beat them by five wickets — their 33rd defeat in 42 county matches, against which can be set just one win, which came in a 40-overs match at Hardpool last July, when the thoughts of their opponents, Essex, were focused on an impending cup tie 350 miles away.

The match yesterday resumed finely poised and Boon was confident of a Durham win, but as Nottinghamshire's run-chase gathered momentum his players' inexperience told. Fielding errors crept in, bowling became loose, runs leaked away. Nottinghamshire, who should have been stretched to score 34 runs off four overs, sprinted home with three balls in hand. To those used to watching Durham, it was a depressingly familiar tale.

Boon has been brought to the North East in what is tantamount to a last throw of the dice by a club whose brief life as a first-class outfit has been embarrassingly devoid of success. It is a failure that is mirrored in rapidly declining membership figures.

Boon has been given a two-year contract and sweeping powers. Neither Geoff Cook, the cricket executive, nor Norman Gifford, the first XI coach, wield the authority they did last year.

He is as much a cricketer as they come, but it may be difficult for Boon to maintain a positive impression in such a



Boon, right, attempts to rally his troops as they head for defeat against Nottinghamshire at Trent Bridge yesterday. Photograph: Neal Simpson

downtrodden environment. "My biggest task is to encourage the players to be positive in everything they do," he said. "They must realise that what's gone is gone. Yesterday does not matter. The only thing that is important is what happens now."

It is one thing saying this, another getting the message home. Last week Lancashire's last-wicket pair were permitted to score 146 together. "It was frustrating and we talked about it afterwards. What you have to remember is that this club is only five years old. We have a lot of players young in years and experience. The scars of the past are still there."

Boon has been described by Dean Jones as an "untypical Australian", for the presence

he commands is a firm but calm one. When he arrives at the crease he will pointedly hold up a survey to the field before taking his first ball. In the field there is little hand-clapping or verbal exhortation from him. He remains de-

tached, as he coolly assesses Durham's resources.

"It is probably true that I'm quieter than some — though with Jones in the side you did not need to say anything — but if you are going to say something it needs to be fashioned

with the right words. I played most of my career under Allan Border and he picked his words carefully. We were great mates and, I suppose, similar in character." If Boon says little, it is generally accepted that when he speaks people listen.

Inside his first fortnight at Durham he caused a minor controversy by imposing what has been described as a curfew on the players, by insisting that they are in bed by midnight. Boon, who is a stickler for time-keeping, likes to talk about "cricket time" and "normal time". "Cricket time" begins at midnight. "It is not a curfew," he said, "but if it is broken we'll see what happens."

News of the "curfew" has caused wry smiles among

those who remember that Boon, who has come to county cricket late at the age of 36, once put away 42 cans of beer on a flight from Sydney to London. "I like a beer and so do most people, but if we're quoting Dean Jones you'll find he says in his book that I was rarely out of bed after ten o'clock. It is very important to know when to celebrate."

That is not a problem that has so far troubled Durham.

"We must think about winning matches rather than just saving them," he said. "But one of the hardest lessons is learning how to win. We will be a much better side for one win under our belt." How it will be achieved — and how Boon's faith in the sporting cycle will survive the next two years — remain to be seen.

TRENT BRIDGE SCOREBOARD

DURHAM		NOTTINGHAMSHIRE	
P.D. Collingsworth	5	M.P. Dommen	5
P.D. Collingsworth	5	R.T. Robinson	5
M.A. Rosebery	5	S.P. Speight	5
D.C. Boon	5	G.F. Archer	5
N.J. Boon	5	J. Johnson	5
P.J. Johnson	5	J. Johnson	5
M.M. Betts	5	N.A. Gee	5
M.M. Betts	5	C.M. Tolley	5
E. Evans	5	E. Evans	5
(D.B. & B.)	5	(D.B. & B.)	5
5	5	5	5
Total (5 wkt, 50 overs)	280	Total (5 wkt, 49.2 overs)	284
J. Johnson, N. Boon, S. J. Evans, R. T. Robinson and R. A. Peck did not bat.			
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-82, 2-96, 3-122, 4-207, 5-219		FALL OF WICKETS: 1-13, 2-39, 3-78, 4-161, 5-185	
BOWLING: Evans 5-3-38-0, Betts 5-3-44, Tolley 5-3-43-0, Gee 5-25-0, Boon 5-0-2-0, Archer 5-12-1, Walker 10-52-0, Collingsworth 3-12-12, Umpher J. Collingsworth and H.D. Bird		BOWLING: Evans 5-3-38-0, Betts 5-3-44, Tolley 5-3-43-0, Gee 5-25-0, Boon 5-0-2-0, Archer 5-12-1, Walker 10-52-0, Collingsworth 3-12-12, Umpher J. Collingsworth and H.D. Bird	

FOR THE RECORD

UNIBOND LEAGUE: First division: Ashton		AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION: First	
United 2 (9.0)	0	Stoke-on-Trent 3	1
Warrington 0	0	Queens Park Rangers 0	0
Warrington 0	0	Lucon Town 3	0
Warrington 0	0		

ICE HOCKEY

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP: Pool A (Match 1): Russia 5 Germany 1; Slovakia 5 France 0; United States 3-1; France 3-1; Slovakia 3-1; Women: Switzerland 3-0; Canada 3-0; Germany 3-0; North Korea 1-0; South Korea 1-0; North Korea 3-0; Third place play-off: Germany 5-1 South Korea 3-1	

LACROSSE

TOKYO: Women: World Cup: Wales 9	
Canada 8; United States 7; England 5;	
Australia 5; Scotland 3	

TODAY'S FIXTURES

UNISPORT UNITED COUNTIES LEAGUE: First division: Bournmouth v Poole 5	
Poole 5	
UNISET TURF: Buxton 5	
Lancaster 5	
UNISET TURF: Buxton 5	

UNISET TURF: Buxton 5	
Lancaster 5	
UNISET TURF: Buxton 5	

CRICKET: Benson and Hedges Cup	
Benson and Hedges Cup	
Benson and Hedges Cup	

Con-men duo are caught 'bang to rights'

The indecent haste with which the powers-that-be at ITV have brought back their new double act, Abbott and Green, should have done them no favours. After all, it's just a few weeks since Paul Abbott's script enabled Robson Green to plant a rainy smackero on the lips of Francesca Annis in *Reckless* and here they were again last night in *Touching Evil* (ITV) — Green playing a policeman and Abbott using up one of the scripts he had left over from *Cracker*.

So let's get the rest of the cynical stuff over at the start. It's another police series, which was not exactly imaginative and within ten minutes it was a more familiar sort of double act. "Both of you," growled Commander Enwright (Michael Feast) of the Organised and Serial Crime Unit, imperiously dispatching both DI Creegan (Green) and DI Taylor (Nicola Walker) to St Albans to solve a series of child abductions. The sharp-eyed am-

ong you will have noticed that DI Taylor was a woman. The official line at this stage, agreed in the departure lounge of Stuttgart Airport, was that they don't fancy each other. We shall see.

New paragraph, same cynicism. Creegan's character is straight out of the cupboard marked successful stereotypes — bit of a loner, healthy disregard for rules, doesn't like answering to anybody. Well, I never. As for Green's performance — it's exactly the same as the one he gave in *Reckless*. In fact, the only way of telling Creegan and Owen Springer apart is that Creegan has a scar on his forehead, caused by an ill-advised collision with a bullet. We sorted that out at Stuttgart airport, too.

Still cynical, sorry. The structure of Abbott's script closely resembled the favoured format of *Cracker*, in that we know (or at least we think we know) whodunit almost from the outset. We know thanks

to a preposterous ten minutes in which Creegan spotted daffodils (in December, mind you) at ten paces, yellow Volvos at a hundred yards and recalled an identical case two years ago in... Stuttgart. You could tell he'd been to university, couldn't you?

Is that enough cynicism? Probably. Because there was good news, albeit of a predictable kind. Creegan and Taylor can see why they didn't call it that may be just another police double act, but Walker was one of the few people to walk away from *Cracker* with her reputation intact and deserves a second chance. As for Green's performance, it was enormously popular in *Reckless* and I'm sure it will be again here, aided and abetted by a riveting performance from Ian McDiarmid as Hinks, the chieftain and only suspect.

However, I still have reservations about Abbott's over-stylised,

Matthew Bond

but undeniably well-paced, script, not least because of the presence of Cyril, the over-weight psychic, who sees things "through the clouds". We left him last night, suffering a serious attack of asthma by psychic proxy. Buy that and you'll all set for part two.

Over on Channel 4, *One Night Stand*, a *Cutting Edge* special, managed to encapsulate much of what is wrong with modern docu-

mentary-making. A cheap come-on of a title, some deeply unimaginative research, intrusive camerawork and a tedious hour spent in the company of four people convinced that the sun shone out of their sex lives.

From the outset, Edmund Coulthard, the director, made it clear that this was a film about people who deliberately set out for one night stands, rather than encounter them accidentally. It was a decision that robbed his film of much of its potential humour and — how can I put this delicately — a possible reference point or two for those watching.

It was also a decision that led straight to his far too predictable subjects: the self-consciously single mother, the promiscuous gay male and, inevitably, two "lads" who shared a house and a laddish lifestyle together. All four were united by a single over-riding urge: to be on television.

They would do anything. "OK if we film you getting into the bath, Jean-Yves?" Fine, said our glad-to-be-gay man from *Réunion*. "How about holding your fights up, Bonnie?" I'm wearing trousers, will my friend's do? They would "Mark me, how about we make you up while your former girlfriend tells you that she's 24 and doesn't want to be just a shag?" "And some."

Part one was getting ready and talking, endlessly, about "it". Part two was clubbing and part three, after a symbolic montage of blurred headlights, was the morning after. Mathematically the success rate was 75 per cent, but it gradually became apparent that the picture was more complex than that. One of the lads had slept with an "ex" (yes, the same one) which hardly counted, while the other two appeared to be at the start of something more.

An unspecified number of weeks later, Bonnie and her gang were tip-toeing round the dread word "commitment" and Jean-Yves was looking rather mournful about not having shown a little more of it to David. The conclusion? Life is thankfully a lot more complicated than the makers of this documentaries would have you believe.

But nothing like as complicated as it's getting for Gary Sparrow (Nicholas Lyndhurst) in *Goodnight Sweetheart* (BBC1): "Tomorrow I'll have two wives, 54 years apart and, in a few months' time, a kid old enough to be my father." Helped by the seamless recasting of Elizabeth Carling and Emma Amos in the female leads and the ever-reliable Victor McGuire, the series is showing surprisingly little sign of running out of steam. Last night, it even notched up a television first — a rude and very funny joke about reflexology. And no, you can't do it to yourself.

BBE/1 1997

6.00am Business Broadcast (56563)
7.00 BBC Breakfast News (7017924)
9.05 Election Call Prime Minister John Major answers questions posed by viewers on the eve of the general election (967295)

10.00 Style Channel (41059)

10.30 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (99011)

11.00 News (1) Regional News and Weather (4067159)

11.05 The Really Useful Show (6583450)

11.35 Snooker: World Championship Coverage from the semi-finals at Sheffield's Crucible Theatre (3762634)

12.35pm Good Living (911127)

1.00 News (1) and weather (57108)

1.30 Regional News (50747011)

1.45 Neighbours (40632437)

2.10 Snooker and Racing Snooker: Douglin Donnelly introduces live coverage of the quarter-finals from Sheffield. Racing from Ascot: Julian Wilson introduces the 3.05 Insurup: Sagaro Stakes and 3.40 Insurup Victoria Cup (493547)

4.00 Monstar Cafe (5611740) 4.15 Gadget Boy (5697618) 4.35 Out of Time (7644127) 5.00 Newround (1) (5565278)

5.10 Blue Peter (1) (2785437)

5.35 Neighbours (1) (494837)

6.00 News (1) and weather (189)

6.30 Regional News (769)

7.00 Antiques Roadshow: Hugh Scully takes a nostalgic look at highlights from previous series (1) (7655)

7.30 Tomorrow's World: Phillipa Forrester tries out a pressurised chamber for athletes to sleep in; and a pen which translates languages (1) (553)

8.00 The National Lottery Live: Carol Smillie introduces the millionaire-making draw from Glasgow, with guests Ant and Dec (1) (922255)

8.10 *Bodykiddenged*: A brush with death leaves Ambrose with second thoughts about marrying Niamh, and he considers entering the priesthood. Instead — can Fionn, Clifford and Assumpta persuade him to go ahead with the wedding? (1) (310188)

9.00 News (1) and weather (5585)

9.25 National Lottery Update (290180)

10.00 They Think It's All Over: Funnyman Stephen Fry joins regulars Gary Lineker, David Gower, Lee Hurst and Tony McGuire for the comedy sports quiz, hosted by Nick Hancock (1) (61092)

10.30 Sportsnight: Desmond Lyman presents the international highlights of England's crucial World Cup qualifying against the talented Georgians at Wembley. Plus, the pick of the action from Scotland's game in Sweden, the Republic of Ireland's visit to Romania and Northern Ireland's visit to Armenia. *Shocker*: World Championship, meanwhile, has reached the quarter-final stage (1) (96818)

12.30pm Cops and Robbers (1973) with Cliff Gorman and Roger Bologna. Light-hearted crime cases about a couple of New York cops who pull off a million-dollar heist on Wall Street, only to fall foul of the Mob. Directed by Aram Avakian (1586804)

1.55 Weather (3551401)

BBE/2 1997

6.00am OJU: Living with Cracks (2764837)
6.25 Empowerment (2776572) 6.50 Inspector by Torchlight (7512519)

7.15 See Hear Breakfast News (5051450)

7.30 Teenage Turtles (1) (4642905) 7.55 The Lowdown (1) (7154479) 8.20 Phlibert the Frog (1) (8653924) 8.25 Buzzzy Bees and Friends (1) (7633301) 8.35 The Raccoons (1) (9262337)

9.00 Modern Portuguese (3390382)

9.25 Belief File (6438160) 9.45 Words and Pictures (2645856) 10.00

Teletubbies (52201) 10.30 Numbertime (2854385) 10.45 Cats' Eyes (2659818)

11.00 Moving to England (4034169) 11.20 The Art (7438924) 11.40 Study Island: Geography (650721) 12.00 The Shape of the World (88905)

12.30pm Working Lunch (15547)

1.00 Collection (7017402) 1.25 Zig Zag (64595740) 1.45 Come Outside (50740108) 2.05 Phlibert the Frog (1) (37675566) 2.05 Buzzzy Bees and Friends (1) (76374837)

2.10 Racing from Ascot: the 2.30 Insurup

Conditions Stakes. Coverage continues on BBC1 (2160721)

2.50 A-Z of Food: H is for Honey (1) (7836818) 3.00 News (1) (7021924) 3.05 Campaign Roadshow (1) (9280059) 3.35 News (1) (6149108)

4.00 Snooker: Quarter-final coverage continued from BBC1 (3879817)

5.50 Lifeline (1) (123363)

6.00 Star Trek: The Next Generation (1) (125672)

6.45 Snooker: The final session of the quarter-final (454276)

7.30 Black Britain Profile of merchant banker Laurie May (1) (295)

8.00 University Challenge: Manchester v Glamorgan (1) (1818)

8.30 Home Front: Home Improvement magazine (1) (3633)



Confession profession (9.00pm)

9.00 Modern Times: Quirky look at the intimacy of the hairdresser's chair. Last in series (1) (7855)

9.50 A Woman Called Smith: Profile of Christina, who had a major role in the transformation of Covent Garden (1) (218011)

10.00 Airport: Last in series (1) (709634)

10.30 Newsnight (69276)

11.30 Face to Face: Sir Jeremy Isaacs in conversation with Allen Ginsberg, who died earlier this month (1) (941160)

12.10am Close Up (7371642)

12.30-6pm OJU: Environmental Solutions

1.00 Large Scale Production 1.30 RE Collection 4.00

English Heritage 4.30 Uniset in the Classroom 5.00 Making the Curriculum Work 5.30-6.00 Voluntary Matters

HTV

6.00am GMTV (6058672)

9.25 Supermarket Sweep (1) (3907295)

9.55 Regional News (199382)

10.00 The Time, the Place (36127)

11.30 The Morning (171) (6179943)

12.20pm Regional News (4723011)

12.30 News (1) and weather (9103924)

12.55 Shortland Street (911948) 1.24 HTV

Crimesoppers (3562556) 1.25 Home and Away (7415566) 1.26 Friends (1) (6458081) 1.50 Afternoon Live (3758758) 2.20 Vanessa (1) (35862063) 2.50 Afternoon Live (3586214)

3.20 The Time (1) (703214)

3.30 Alphabet Castle (1) (6574265) 3.40 Tots TV (125450) 3.50 Oscar and Friends (1) (6137363) 3.55 Sooty and Co (6160022)

4.20 Tiny Toon Adventures (1) (5617924) 4.40 Harry's Mad (1) (6859586)

5.10 Bagdad Cafe (1) (1960295)

5.40 News (1) and weather (660943)

6.00 Home and Away (1) (404740)

6.25 HTV Weather (380721)

6.30 The West Tonight (1) (837)

7.00 Emmerdale: Chris turns to Zoe in his hour of need (1) (2924)

7.30 Coronation Street: Alina busies herself making plans for the future (1) (721)

8.00 The Hypnotic World of Paul McKenna: The master of mesmerism is joined by Gareth Hunt, Bobby Davro, Vinnie Jones, Bob Holness, Roy Barraclough, Debbie Greenwood and Gary Busey (1) (718)

8.30 Prime Suspect IV: Old Jane Tennison jail the wrong man back in the original *Prime Suspect*? A spate of similar murders suggest she committed a terrible blunder in the case that made her name. Suspended from duty, she turns to psychologist lover Patrick Schofield for moral support — but encounters only betrayal. With Helen Mirren. Continues after the news (1) (4063)

10.00 News (1) and weather (78180)

10.30 Regional News (123547)

10.40 Prime Suspect IV: Conclusion of tonight's drama (1) (8274547)

11.45 Hunter (1) (158721)

12.15 Sam Beale: Late Adults-only mayhem presented by the Jersey Beadle (39046)

12.45 Movie Club (93587)

1.15 Real Stories of the Highway Patrol (175194)

1.40 Roughcut (1980): Comic crime caper with Burt Reynolds, Leslie-Anne Down and David Niven. Comic Directed by Don Siegel (491710)

3.35 Not Far Away (7254791)

4.30 The Time, the Place (1) (47791) 5.0



Whitakers lead the charge for World Cup honours

SPORT

WEDNESDAY APRIL 30 1997

Sheringham set for England return

Shearer revels in match with perfect partner

By OLIVER HOLT, FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

THE patriotic drum will be beating again, the capacity crowd will be in rude voice and selective memories will be standing by to banish the lingering disappointment of the 1-0 defeat by Italy in February to their darkest recesses. England's World Cup group two qualifying match against Georgia at Wembley tonight is as much about recapturing a mood as securing three more points to take them towards the *finals* in France next year.

This match that seemed as though it might be inconsequential once, sandwiched as it is in the middle of the England campaign, has become a seminal tie now, an encounter that, together with the game against Poland in Katowice next month, will decide whether England can indeed recover their poise and go on to Rome in October with the big prize left to play for.

It is about regaining the momentum built up so painstakingly in the prelude to the European championship last year and then allowed to run wild during the tournament. It is about trying to restore that invaluable feeling of confidence that lulled so many supporters into believing that England were favourites to beat the Italians that night at Wembley, even though key players were missing.

The defeat against Italy that suddenly cast into doubt the ability to qualify for the World Cup punctured much of the euphoria left over from Euro '96 and the empty victory over Mexico in the international match last month did little to inflate it again. A victory tonight, though, in a bona fide competitive tie, would bring the "feel-good" factor flooding back.

In some respects, of course, after the loss to an Italian team rejuvenated by the steward-

GROUP TWO

RESULTS: Moldova 0 England 3; Moldova 0 Italy 1; England 3 Poland 2; Poland 2 Moldova 1; England 0 Italy 1; Italy 3 Moldova 0; Moldova 0 Poland 0

MATCHES TO COME: Today: England v George; Italy v Poland; Poland v Moldova; Moldova v Georgia; Sept 10: England v Moldova; Georgia v Italy; Sept 14: Moldova v Georgia; Oct 7: Moldova v Poland; Oct 11: Italy v England; Georgia v Poland

said yesterday. "I feel we have got the players. Everyone seems to have cast us aside after that one result against Italy. Well, as far as I'm concerned we start again on Wednesday, we win the match and we go from there."

In his quest for the spirit of last summer, Hoddle will at last be able to draw not only on the return of David Seaman, absent against Italy, but also on the attacking partnership that was, in many ways, the greatest success of England's drive towards the semi-finals of Euro '96. But it would be wrong just to mention him.

Finally, Shearer even injected a little humour into his observations. "In some ways, I think Teddy and I are similar," he said. "But I think he is a lot more likely to pass to me than I am to him. If I had the ball, he was in a better position and I had no chance to score, I would still shoot."

ENGLAND (probable): D Seaman (Arsenal), G Neville (Manchester United), A Ferdinand (Leeds), S. Carr (Tottenham), D Hoddle (Manchester United), P Ince (international), D Batty (Newcastle), D. Venables (Leeds), S. Sheringham (Tottenham Hotspur), G Le Saux (Blackburn Rovers), A Shearer (Newcastle United)

Afterwards, as radio and television crews conducted six

interviews with various players and officials on the outfield, in front of the pleasant club house, people reflected with good cheer on this day of days. Decker Curry's nomination for the gold award, ahead of Hansie Cronje, proved a popular choice, and there was brave talk of beating Essex when they go to Downpatrick in two weeks' time.

Curry, the opening batsman, alas, will not be at Taunton on Friday because of work commitments, but his brilliant 75 set the tone of their innings on Monday and he is hoping to play against Glamorgan in Cardiff next Monday. If he makes it, go and watch him. Get there early. He may dazzle, or perish quickly.

Justin Benson, the Ireland captain and once of Leicestershire, basked in the glow of victory, but remained unhappy about the way that Ireland lost the recent ICC Trophy

play-off to Scotland in Kuala Lumpur. "People said we choked," he said, "but it wasn't that. We were complacent that day, and let down Mike Hendrick [the team coach]; but we were sharp in this match."

Cronje began the day

of making 148 in 17.4

overs and, after Jamie Hewitt

swung Benson to Angus Dunlop in deep mid-wicket, they were 103 short with ten overs to go. It was then that Peter Gillespie, running in 30 yards from long on, took a superb driving catch to dismiss Keith Brown. To reach the ball was a fair effort and to keep his footing on the wet outfield as he tumbled over made it a magnificent catch.

For a while, Fraser and

Tufnell

frolicked and, with

two wickets in hand, a target of 59 from five overs was just about possible. Fraser, relishing his role with the bat, struck two sixes. Cronje, his third wicket to set beside his unbroken 94, and the game was up when Cook, having driven Heasley for six, missed

the next ball but one. Fraser

was unbeaten with 30.

Garting and Cronje agreed that Curry's early blast gave Ireland an edge that they retained. "They have obviously done their homework on the 50-over game," Garting said.

"They got off to a good start and, when you stick somebody like Cronje in the middle of it, and he bats as he did, you're up against a pretty good team."

Benson and Hendrick were

busy men later, as the world and his wife wanted a piece of them. A spectator revealed how, when he heard a report on the BBC World Service the previous night, mentioning how Middlesex were up a gun tree in Dublin, he nearly leapt out of bed in shock. That's the measure of what Ireland's cricketers achieved yesterday, and it was grand to see their pleasure at a job well done.



Cronje, right, helps to open a bottle of champagne in Clontarf to start the celebration of Ireland's first victory over a county side

Ireland take the bull by the horns

FROM MICHAEL HENDERSON
IN DUBLIN

DUBLIN: Ireland (2pts) beat Middlesex by 46 runs

AN ENGLISH translation of Clontarf is "meadow of the bull" and yesterday, in this north Dublin suburb, Middlesex were the victims of the season's first unlikely bovine charge. Ireland took the four wickets that remained overnight within an hour in this Benson and Hedges Cup match to record their first victory over a county side.

Rejoice with them. Middlesex, at their immense credit, did, lining up to greet their visitors as they left the field. Ireland played good cricket in this match and Mike Garting, the Middlesex captain, will take nothing away from their performance. This was a marvellous day for the under-valued and it was much savoured by the hardy band of Irish cricket-lovers who had gathered to witness the moment of triumph.

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interviews with various players and officials on the outfield, in front of the pleasant club house, people reflected with good cheer on this day of days. Decker Curry's nomination for the gold award, ahead of Hansie Cronje, proved a popular choice, and there was brave talk of beating Essex when they go to Downpatrick in two weeks' time.

Curry, the opening batsman, alas, will not be at Taunton on Friday because of

DUBLIN SCOREBOARD

J D Curry c Weekes	75
W K McCallen c Brown b Fraser	17
D A Lewis b Tufnell	34
W J Cronje not out	94
J D R Benson b Heskay	20
J A Patterson not out	17
Extras (b 10, w 3, nb 4)	281
Total (4 wkt, 80 overs)	281
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-48, 2-17, 3-165, 4-284.	
BOWLING: Fraser 10-3-34-1; Cook 8-0-10-0; Heskay 10-3-31-1; Weekes 10-0-47-1; Tufnell 6-0-37-1; Dunn 5-0-29-0; Garting 0-4-0	
MIDDLESEX	
P N Weekes c Gillespie b Heskay	24
P E Wellings lbw b Cronje	23
Umpires J W Holder and A A Jones	
Gold award: J D Curry.	

work commitments, but his brilliant 75 set the tone of their innings on Monday and he is hoping to play against Glamorgan in Cardiff next Monday. If he makes it, go and watch him. Get there early. He may dazzle, or perish quickly.

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busy men later, as the world and his wife wanted a piece of them. A spectator revealed how, when he heard a report on the BBC World Service the previous night, mentioning how Middlesex were up a gun tree in Dublin, he nearly leapt out of bed in shock. That's the measure of what Ireland's cricketers achieved yesterday, and it was grand to see their pleasure at a job well done.

YORKSHIRE triumph 52

Bet off 52

Boon's burden 53

Model professionals toy with the relegation issue

Andrew Jones on the heavy price to be paid for being taken out of the shop window

over the changing fortunes at the foot of the Premiership

almost as much as supporters of the clubs that are involved.

Gary Booker, marketing director of the company, said: "We do not currently have a licence with the Nationwide League, and stores are reluctant to keep players from relegation clubs on their shelves. Once a club leaves the Premiership the focus is off them and this does have an effect on stock levels."

Among the many pitfalls of the loss of a cherished place in the Premiership is that whole teams become persona non grata to Corinthian's, the UK's top-selling toy in the last Christmas, behind Action Man and Barbie.

Surprise relegation candidates such as Forest and Middlesbrough can cost the company thousands of pounds in lost revenue. The result is that Corinthian fret

it appearing in shops, time for careers and reputations to plummet.

"We obviously expected Nottingham Forest and Middlesbrough to do better than they have," Booker said. "Our boxed team set of Forest only reached the stores in October 1996."

It wasn't the only disappointment caused by Forest — an original model and mould of Frank Clark had been approved for Corinthian's range of Premiership managers, but his resignation came a few days before the models were to be put into production.

Corinthian could do nothing about 5,000 Kevin Keegan figures. The models were expected to be one of the company's top sellers, but a matter of hours after a shipment of finished Keegans had left the factory in China for the UK, the real Keegan resigned as manager of Newcastle United.

Booker said: "It's just one of those things we have learned to live with in our business."

The first season in the Premiership for promoted clubs can have many pitfalls for the company and, with the recent record of many new arrivals, no figures were produced for Sunderland, Derby County or Leicester City this season.

Sadly, for Barnsley fans, the club's first season in the top division may not be marked with a figure of even one of their players, but Bolton's quick return to the Premiership is good news for Corinthian. After a year, quite literally, in the shadows, Bolton players will soon be where any footballer aims to be — back in the shop window.

Lewis gets go ahead to take on Akinwande

By SRIKUMAR SEN
BOXING CORRESPONDENT

LENNOX LEWIS will defend his World Boxing Council heavyweight championship against Henry Akinwande at Atlantic City, New Jersey, on July 10. The bout will be staged by Lewis's promoter, Panix, together with its American associate, Main Events.

Panos Eliades, the head of Panix, concluded the deal yesterday after signing agreements with Don King, the American promoter, HBO, the American cable television company, and Sky TV, which will show the bout at 11.50pm.

Eliades said that Lewis was delighted that his company had secured the bout and was happy to get on with the contest, to get it out of the way and prepare for his next contest, which he hopes will be against Evander Holyfield. Lewis is confident that Holyfield will beat Tyson again when they meet on June 26. Lewis is already training in Miami and will move next week to the Pocono mountains in Pennsylvania.

Eliades added that he had been in talks with King for a month. King wanted to come to an arrangement as he did not want to go to purse offers for fear of having to bid more than the fight would be worth to secure it. He offered Lewis \$6 million [about £3.7 million] to sign a deal, but Panix offered to buy the promotion by making King a counteroffer, which is believed to be in the region of \$3 million to stage the show and the American promoter readily agreed.

Not your rank and file pint.

CHARLES WELLS
BOMBARDIER BITTER
BREWED BY THE CHARLES WELLS FAMILY
BREWERY, BEDFORDSHIRE. EST. 1876.



Pearce, Ravanelli, Juninho and Dicks await their fate

ACROSS
1 Back matter in book (10)
8 One-eighth of a mile (7)
9 John Philip — the March King (5)
10 Vegetable sounds like liquid escape (4)
11 Residential outskirts (8)
13 Very hot (6)
15 Very nasty (6)
17 Ancient regime Paris prison (8)
18 A defect (4)
21 Greek (5)
22 Without guile, embellishment (7)
23 On which gymnasts bounce (10)
DOWN
2 Contract; moneybag (5)
3 Love; his London statue (4)
4 Canoe manager's bench (football) (6)
5 Dorothea's boring husband (*Middlemarch*) (8)
6 Sleep (7)
7 By a long distance (3,3,4)
8 Crumble away (4,2,4)
12 World's highest lake (S.Am.) (8)
14 Consideration; admiration (7)
16 Lavish (meal) (4-2)
19 First Soviet leader (5)
20 Dance; sphere (4)

SOLUTION TO TIMES TWO CROSSWORD 1076
In association with BRITISH MIDLAND
ACROSS: 1 Robe 3 Step down 8 Sizable 10 Tweak 11 Helen Troy 13 Uproar 15 Bridal 17 Take-home pay 20 Adieu 21 Risotto 22 Grannies 23 Hyena
DOWN: 1 Rush hour 2 Bezel 4 Tee off 5 Peter Grimes 6 One-down 7 Nuke 9 Bannockburn 12 Play down 14 Resins 16 Charge 18 Petty 19 Fang

SOLUTION TO TIMES TWO CROSSWORD 1076
In association with BRITISH MIDLAND
ACROSS: 1 Graphite 5 Siam 8 Absurdly 9 Amos 11 Tipsy 12 Overrun 15 Dum sum 15 Public 18 Insular 19 Apron 21 Crux 22 Incredulity 23 Slew 24 Reported
DOWN: 1 Grated 2 Aesop 3 Hurly-burly 4 Tallow 6 Immortal 7 Mason 10 Get-up-and-go 14 Misrule 16 Content 17